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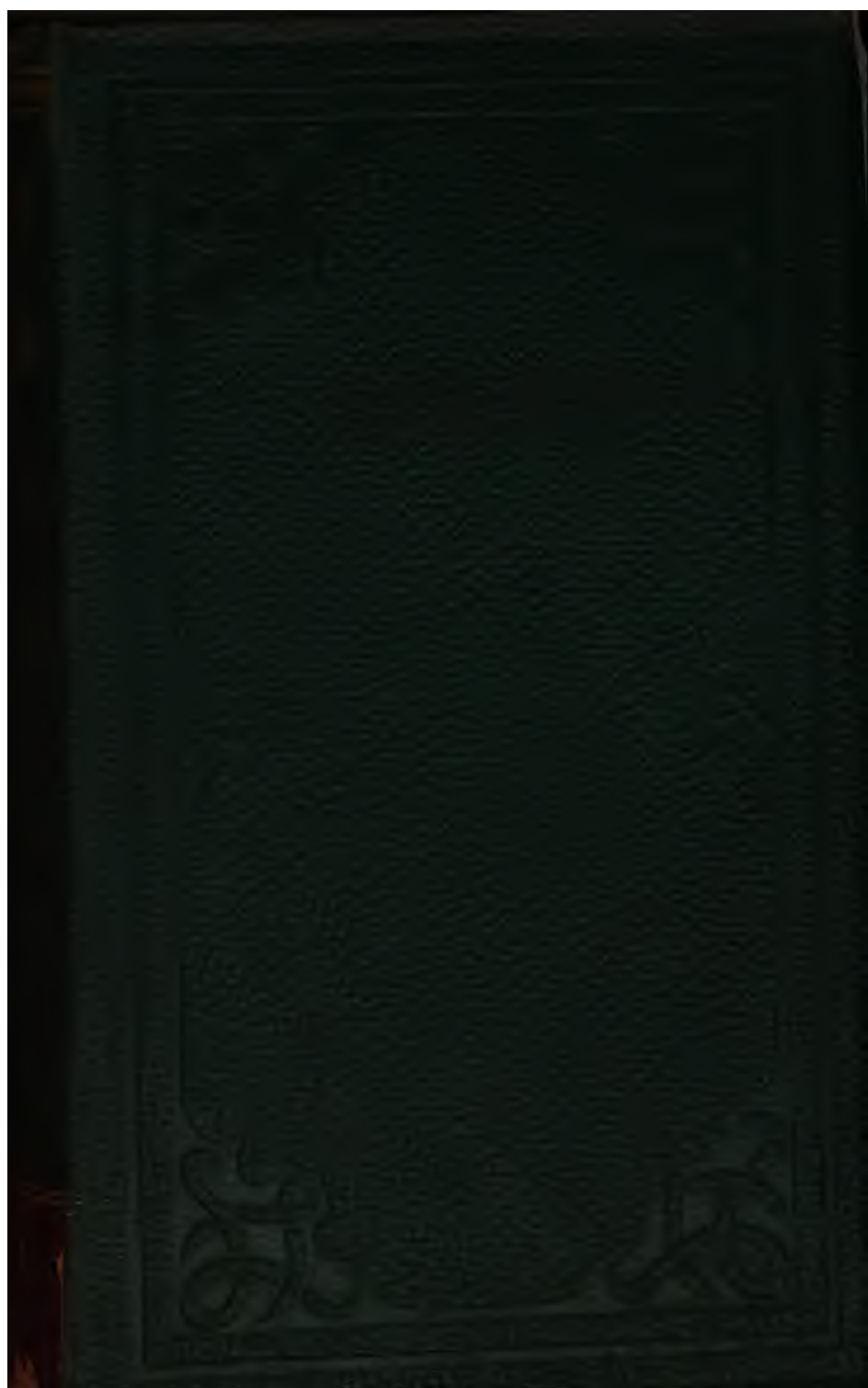
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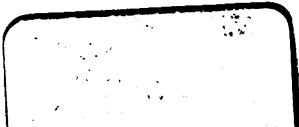
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A HISTORY  
OF  
THE ROMANS  
UNDER THE EMPERORS.

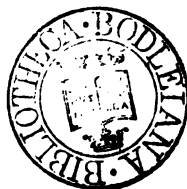
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## CHAPTER I.

‘Thou art in Rome! the city that so long  
Reigned absolute, the mistress of the world;  
The mighty vision that the Prophets saw,  
And trembled; that from nothing, from the least,  
The lowliest village (what but here and there  
A reed-roofed cabin by a river side?)  
Grew into everything.’—ROGERS.

### AUGUSTUS, THE FIRST EMPEROR.

OUR SAVIOUR’S advent dates from about the middle of the reign of Augustus; and fitly did the famous peace which then hushed the civil wars of the Roman world in a repose so calm, passive, and almost deathlike, precede the coming of the Prince of Peace, to make that peace spiritual, universal, and eternal. Founded by a small band of marauders, for security’s sake, upon the wild and solitary Palatine Hill, Rome had now swelled from a ‘den of the wolves of Italy’ into a seven-hilled city, the emporium of the world, furnished with every luxury, and many of her chief necessities from foreign cities, which on every coast and in every clime vied with intense rivalry in ministering to her insatiable appetite. Every summer her glittering sea was alive with vessels; and as each successive fleet neared the harbour of Ostia or Puteoli, the well-known topsails were descried above the horizon by the watchmen of Rome, a deputation of senators went forth

to greet its arrival, a general holiday was proclaimed, and multitudes streamed out to the pier to gaze at all the gay flags and ensigns expanded by the rich flotilla, for joy at escaping the dangers of the deep; to hail the bronzed veterans returning spoil-laden to their great 'Mother City;' and to amuse themselves with inspecting the crowds of foreigners coming from the very ends of the earth, as suitors for justice, candidates for promotion, or seekers after pleasure. Rome was then so strongly felt to be the great central object to which all commercial cupidity looked, that she was represented as a Crowned Queen, sitting enthroned upon the waves of the Mediterranean.

From which ever side of Italy the stranger approached the Imperial City by land, he emerged from the defiles of a magnificent amphitheatre of hills upon a vast open plain, near the centre of which, on the right bank of a noble river, an isolated cluster of seven hills, moderate in size, but crowned with stately edifices, announced the goal towards which, for many a hundred mile, some great Roman road had been conducting him, straight as flies the arrow, to the golden milestone at the foot of the Capitol. This plain, now a most awful image of death in the bosom of life, was already deserted by the vast swarms of population which had made it at once the hive and garden of Italy; its arable, fertile fields had been turned into pasture, whilst the cultivators of the soil had gone to swell the teeming population of the capital. But the stranger saw, in the stead of their hundred towns, numerous stately aqueducts, conveying from afar rivers of limpid water to this greatest of cities, over arches and through tunnels innumerable, bridging valleys and piercing mountains—monuments of the pomp and power of the people to whose luxury or wants they so ostentatiously ministered, rendered the more impressive from the solitudes through

which, for many successive miles, they planted their giant footsteps.

The awe with which the mistress of the world would be naturally approached was redoubled by the wayside spectacle, peculiarly Roman, of the monuments of the dead ; for the sepulchres of twenty generations, crossed by the gaunt shade of funeral cypresses, lined with historic marble the sides of the eighteen well-appointed high-roads for several miles beyond the walls. The Appian Road, proudly styled the Queen of Ways, by which the stranger approached from Greece or Africa, was especially distinguished for the grandeur of its tombs. Here still rises the noble monument to Cecilia Metella, 'the wealthiest Roman's wife,' thus described by Byron :—

'There is a stern round tower of other days,  
Firm as a fortress with its fence of stone,  
Such as an enemy's baffled strength delays,  
Standing with half its battlements alone,  
And with two thousand years of ivy grown—  
The garland of Eternity, where waves  
The green leaves over all by time o'erthrown.  
What was this tower of strength? Within its cave  
What treasure lay so lock'd, so hid? A woman's grave.'

But a still deeper impression of the grandeur of Rome was made on the stranger from Gaul by the prospect from Mons Marius, hard by the Flaminian Gate, as I can readily understand from the tide of emotions which it often swelled in myself. Hard by the Milvian Bridge, the scene of so many famous battles, spans 'the Yellow Tiber,' here deeper and wider than the Thames at Blackfriars, and the hills rising from its banks—the Janiculus and Vaticanus—sweeping away to some distance, return in their boldest form at this celebrated hill, whence the rugged chain of the Ape-



nines, covered with snow for more than six months in the year, rises to the right of the far off horizon, and the Campagna stretches away to the left, its nearly level line melting into the more level line of the sea, which can only be distinguished from it by the bright line of light reflected from its waters. It was upon this vast plain that most of those achievements were performed that raised ancient Rome to greatness. Where could a warrior-race have found a grander theatre? Here were ample space and 'verge enough for the march of armies, the erection of encampments, the levels required for martial games and exercises, and room for the construction of the multitude of causeways that extended from the Capitol 4,080 miles into the heart of its provinces.

For ages before the days of Augustus, triumphant legions almost daily made these causeways clang with their iron tread. Grand processions glittered along this vast surface, with magnificent cars bearing captive princes arrayed in royal robes that mocked their misery, or conveying ambassadors from foreign lands, hastening to secure the favour of the Senate by gifts of barbaric pearls and gold, or of savage animals dragged from the interior of India or Africa. Even those long, green, swelling ridges in which the Campagna rises and falls, as in the heath country of Surrey and Berkshire, and the myriads of streams which interlace them, then displayed the prowess and wealth of Rome; for the precipitous, rocky cliffs which they form were made the natural strength of numberless citadels, like giant sentinels guarding the approach to the mistress of the world.

Within the enormous walls of Rome rose the famous Seven Hills, crowned with the temples of the gods and mansions of the senators, encircled with groves and gardens. The narrow valleys between them were studded thickly with the houses of the populace, whose crowded families lived on

different flats, as is still the custom in Scotland. Cabins, as is still the case, of mendicants, and of the feudal followers of the nobles, called clients or freedmen, then clustered thickly against the outer walls of the mansions of their patrons (fathers), and from them issued swarms of the most degraded and desperate of the populace. From the very first, the Forum, a public place lying between the Palatine and the Capitoline hills, was the favourite haunt of the citizens, and the only quarter in ancient Rome regularly planned. Its open space, nearly a square, was inclosed by public roads running along its borders, intended for public processions, and lined on the outer edge by rows of temples, the Senate-house, the courts of justice, and the Rostrum, or political pulpit, from which the orators harangued the mighty multitude, crowded without order or distinction around, whilst 'the Conscript Fathers' of the Senate debated in some hall or temple. This famous area, on whose narrow space the affairs of the world were transacted, was surrounded with colonnades, connecting hall with hall and temple with temple, which in the morning were the thoroughfare of men of business, and in the evening, overflowed with a mixed multitude of loungers and idlers amazing to behold. Indeed, the vast assembly daily crowded into the Forum and its outlets exceeded what we commonly witness in our own cities; for the Romans lived very much out of doors, were exceedingly gregarious in their habits, and most of the trades were exercised in the open air. The street-cries, which have ceased only in our own memory in London, were then rife in Rome, and contributed to realize the actual movement of life in the great metropolis, and to deepen the surging murmurs which still seem to resound across the abyss of eighteen centuries. The noble never crossed his threshold without a long train of retainers; the middle classes congregated to

the corners to hear the gossip of the day, and discuss politics ; the freedmen and slaves hovered over the steam of the open cookshops, or loitered on their masters' errands to gaze on the rude drawings posted as placards on the walls, or to snatch a glimpse at the tricks of the conjurors and clowns, or to catch the air of some popular melody. Multitudes of foreigners, too, swelled the overwhelming human tide of population—men of strange costumes and figures, and, when they spoke, of speech still stranger ; who, while they gazed around them with awe and admiration, became themselves each a centre of remark to a crowd of wondering citizens. From the Forum, the Sacra Via (or Holy Way), on one side bordered by public buildings and shops, and on the other, by a range of statues on pedestals, formed an august approach to the next great point of interest, the Capitoline Hill, which it mounted by a gradual ascent before the ancient Temples of Concord and of Saturn. This hill, on its northern summit, contained the temple of Juno Moneta, the Roman Mint ; and that famous fortress, the Capitol, built upon the 'Rock eternal and immoveable, to which,' it was believed, 'the gods had promised the empire of the world, and which the race of Julius and Æneas should inherit for ever and ever.' On the eminence jutting toward the river rose the rock down which had been hurled many a conspirator against the liberties of the Republic—the

' Steep Tarpeian,  
The promontory whence the traitor's leap,  
Cured all ambition.'

On the opposite summit rose the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, the centre of the religious worship of the city, and the shrine to which the consul, dictator, or imperator, always led his conquering legions in his triumphal chariot, climbing the

steep ascent, preceded by the spoils and captives of his triumph, and where he returned thanks for victory by a festal sacrifice. This temple was divided into three cells, or chapels, occupied by the images of Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva. The ancient images of Terminus and Juventas, the legend ran, had refused to quit their stations on the foundation of the Capitol, so they, too, had places within the walls. Hard by were two other temples to Jupiter, under the titles of the Thunderer and Spoil-bearer, and the horrible Mammertine dungeons, the living tombs of many.

The Palatine Hill was the next centre of attraction, as the abode of the Senators. Here rose the modest mansions of the Gracchi, of Hortensius, Crassus, Clodius, Cataline, and Cicero. But all of them had now been swept away, to make room for the magnificent palace of Augustus; and the Senators spread their villas on the crest of the eminence on the farther side of the Tiber, across the oldest of the Roman bridges, the Sublician (or Bridge of Piles): a district which, rising in terraces from the river, enjoyed a noble view of the seven hills on the opposite bank, and was also celebrated for its salubrity. This *Transtiberine* region included the island in the Tiber, which was fashioned at either side into a rude resemblance of a ship, and was densely crowded with habitations. The *Esquiline Hill* was at this time inhabited by the meanest of the citizens; the *Pincian Hill* was chiefly occupied with villas buried in extensive gardens; the *Cælian Hill*, afterwards called after a senator named *Lateranus*, who had a splendid palace on it, the *Aventine*, and the *Quirinal*, were then crowned with temples and stately palaces. Beyond the *Viminal Hill*, without the walls, afterwards stood the celebrated *Prætorian Camp*, which forms such a distinguished object in the history of Rome under the Emperors. North of the city, within the walls, lay a broad plain, called the *Campus*

Martius, or Field of Mars, as from the earliest period the grassy meadows which here skirted the Tiber had been consecrated to the god of war, as a resort for military exercises, and the kindred recreations of leaping, running, and bathing. Thither also the citizens poured in vast crowds, after the business of the day, to indulge in gymnastic games and sports. Here stood the famous Flaminian Gate, through which the conqueror, returning from distant frontiers, conducted his triumphal procession to the Capitol.

Temples were still the chief public buildings which met the eye on every side. They were mostly of Grecian model, oblong, and with long, low roofs, generally crowned with statues, but scarcely overtopping, except from their position, the meaner buildings around them. The invention of bells, the greatest of all boons to architecture, had not yet afforded a motive or excuse for raising the many-storied tower, or suggesting the arrowy flight of the spire or steeple. But there was a solemn significance of the Roman character in the crests of the seven hills encompassing the Forum, being all crowned with a range, almost unbroken, of columned temples, surmounted with images of the gods, who thus seemed to keep watch and ward over the cherished city.

Ancient Romanism, as Neander terms the Pagan worship of Rome, originated with the Etruscans, and it became the ruling idea of all its institutions, manners, arts, and literature, as powerfully as it swayed Etruria itself, from the belief that each and all was of divine authority. The Etruscan Lucumo, or military chieftain, was also the priest and soothsayer of his nation; and, under the legend of the marvellous dwarf Tages, who sprang from the soil to teach mankind the worship of the gods, he claimed infallibility, and pretended to make holy places of worship, or of ordinary abode, and the walls of cities, domestic customs and public ceremonies,

family relations and official personages, births, marriages, and funerals, games, spectacles, and sacrifices. The Etruscan priests claimed peculiar sanctity, and professed—perhaps they believed its truth—the art of foretelling the future by divination. According to them, the secrets of the gods were not imparted directly by inspired oracles, but were to be learnt by priests through a holy discipline of observation and experience. They had secret rules for discovering the future by inspecting the entrails of a sacrificed animal, or by the flight of birds, by omens, or dreams. They studied also the hidden properties of nature, particularly electric phenomena, and had the art of turning their discoveries to their own credit and profit. Legislators and philosophers were to form the morals of the people; the Roman priests, following the Etruscan model only, undertook the remission of their sins. Hence Tartarus and its lurid flames, for the punishment of the unforgiven and wicked sinner, and the gloomy shades, where souls guilty of lesser offences were purified by suffering, these were their favourite topics. Listen to the Roman Milton, Virgil, describing the Purgatory of Ancient Romanism, in words thus rendered by Dryden :—

‘ Therefore the souls hard penance undergo  
 Their crimes to expiate ; some to open winds  
 Exposed are hung ; some plunged in watery gulfs  
 Th’ infected sin wash’d out, or burned with fire ;  
 Each in the spirit thus our pains we bear,  
 Then are admitted to Elysium’s realm.’

The Roman priests boasted, that by their wailings, prayers, and sacrifices—sometimes human—they could propitiate the infernal gods, and even draw

‘ Tears down Pluto’s iron cheek :’

and that they could hasten the purgatorial process by their

sacrificial offerings ; they could freeze the stoutest heart, as they wildly tossed the long snake-like fillets of various coloured ribbons twisted round their heads, brandished burning torches in their hands, and with horrible incantations and curses consigned their enemies to the grasp of the furies.

So intense was the superstition of the Romans, that scarcely a ring, or picture, or goblet, was without its likeness of some god ; and seldom was any act, public or private, performed without invoking its appropriate deity, or consulting a soothsaying priest. The Senate opened its most solemn deliberations in a temple furnished with the altar and image of Victory, a majestic goddess standing on a globe, with flowing garments, expanded wings, and a crown of laurel in her hand. They were sworn on that altar to observe the laws ; a solemn offering of wine and incense was then made, and every old Roman speech began, like that of Appius, ‘I first pray to Jupiter, the best and the greatest, and to the other gods under whose protection are this city and Roman people, the Quirites, that they will allow my words to be of advantage to the State.’ The attachment of the Roman soldiers to their standards was secured by consecrating the golden eagles which glittered in the front of the legions, placing them, after the march or the conflict, in a chapel in the heart of the camp, and sacrificing and burning incense to them as ‘gods of war’ ; so it was more sinful than shameful to desert these sacred ensigns in the stress of battle. Indeed, the first element of the Roman constitution was the union, or confraternity, of several families descended from one common ancestor, and bound together as a *gens*, or clan, by the joint performance of peculiar religious rites. The Senate obtained the yearly census by the stated sum paid to the priests by every citizen at the festival called Compitalia. Every child was purified with holy water and spittle by a priest, who

carried his fee to the temple of Juno Lucina. Every death brought a tribute to the temple of Venus ; and every son arrived at the age of military service brought his offering to the temple of Youth. Almost every hill and dale, streamlet and tree, around Rome, had its 'god-protector.' Of each locality it might be said—

' Between the Naid, Nereid, Dryad throngs,  
A strife is waged, to which the spot belongs.'

All the virtues and vices had their patron-deities at Rome. To their Queen of Heaven they added their beatified heroes, legislators, and generals. They infinitely multiplied their gods by contemplating each under a two-fold personality, as male and female, and by their belief, that when an image was consecrated, the deity to whom it was dedicated dwelt in it as in a body. Hence the belief that these images were full of feeling and sympathy ; that they often indicated by signs their will to favoured worshippers ; and wept in times of public calamity, as Virgil tells us they did at the death of Julius Cæsar. Daemons, a sort of intermediate beings between gods and men, chiefly deified heroes, were supposed to be means of intercourse between both, and defended the dignity of the gods by embodying in themselves all the baser popular legends. Relics of their deified ancestor Romulus, were objects of passionate worship at Rome, especially the black stone which was supposed to be that marking his grave ; the sacred fig-tree, under the shade of which it was fabled that the wolf had given him suck ; and his pretended staff, which was believed to possess prophetic virtue, as having been his instrument for marking out the astrological aspect of the heavens. So intense was the superstition of the Romans, that their whole history and literature bear its impress. Even their drama originated thus ; for it was to propitiate the gods ✓



during a pestilence, that the priests ordered a dance in dumb show, as an accompaniment to the music of the flute. A song was afterwards suited to the music and the dance; then came the chorus, with its smart dialogue of sharp, sparring, rustic railery; and last of all, the regular acted story.

Mystery and pomp strikingly characterized Ancient Romanism. On occasions of peculiar solemnity, the images of their most trusted gods were paraded through the city, on litters borne on the shoulders of splendidly robed priests, chaunting hymns in Greek and Latin in their praise, preceded by troops of boys and girls bearing innumerable flambeaux, and followed by the Consuls, Senators, and Magistrates, all marshalled in military array by the Supreme Pontiff. The hall of justice was closed, the prisoners were unshackled, and all business suspended, until the images were restored, with many genuflexions, to their temples, reclined on splendid cushions, and invited to banquet on sacrifices, cakes of bread, and libations of wine; then the chief priests scattered incense and holy water over the 'worshippers'; and the day ended in feasting, sports, and dancing. Such, for successive days and on a far grander scale, were the ceremonies with which the Romans solemnized each hundredth anniversary of their city, and to this custom we owe the inimitable 'Secular Ode' of Horace. During the eleven hundred years of the existence of Ancient Romanism as the religion of the State, the priesthood kept up an unbroken succession in their colleges. Fifteen Pontiffs regularly professed to interpret the will of the gods by books in their sole possession, and jealously watched over all the questions which incessantly arose in their traditionary system. Fifteen Augurs also observed the face of the heavens, and foretold the future by the flight of birds. Fifteen Keepers of the Sybilline books were consulted as prophets. Seven Epulos had the oversight of the solemn processions and fes-

tivals held in honour of the gods. The Flamens of Jupiter, Mars, and Quirinus, were esteemed the priests of the most powerful deities who watched over the fate of Rome. The King of the Sacrifices represented the person of Numa and his successors, in such rites as could only be performed by royal hands. Six noble virgins kept alive the flame on the altar of Vesta, the patroness of the commonwealth, and watched over a mysterious casket containing relics supposed essential to the existence of Rome. As the idea of death was repugnant to innocence like that imputed to a vestal, the culprit for whom she interceded was instantly pardoned; even the criminal on whom she cast her eyes on his way to the scaffold was forthwith let go free. Woe betide the vestal who broke her vow of virginity! Her blood was not to be shed by man; but a higher tribunal, that of the incensed goddess herself, cut her away from the land of the living, and hid her from the sight of her country for ever. She was sacrificed to the goddess of the Earth, and entombed alive by the priests, with horrible magical rites, in a vault prepared for her without the city. A single crust of bread, and a single cruise of water were placed by her side, and her death was attributed to the hand of the offended divinity; for starvation was considered by the Romans merely as the withdrawal of his gifts by an angry deity; and they thought it no sin to expose to this cruel death their female children or useless slaves.

Cybele was another goddess so exceedingly revered by the Romans, that all her priests were not only vowed to celibacy, as a life of sanctity suitable to the service of 'the great Mother,' but absolutely mutilated before entering office.

The higher classes of the priesthood, especially the Supreme Pontiff, enjoyed an ample stipend from the consecrated lands and public revenues. Their purple robes, chariots of state, and sumptuous entertainments, secured them so much public

reverence and political power, that statesmen, soldiers, and lawyers pressed into their ranks and conferred additional splendour upon them. Julius Cæsar publicly declared the immortality of the soul—the foundation of all religion—to be ‘a vain chimera’; and yet he staked all his fortunes on attaining the office of Supreme Pontiff. As he was going forth to the election he embraced his mother, who stood drowned in tears at his door, saying, ‘This day you will behold your son either Supreme Pontiff of Rome or an exile.’ He gained the coveted dignity; and, so unable was he to stem the superstitious feelings of his countrymen that he crawled on his knees up the steps of the Capitoline temple, to appease Nemesis, the avenging deity who frowns on human prosperity.

The Roman soldier starts forth to view at the name of his most celebrated and successful general. A glance at the early history of the Romans, reveals to us foes more multitudinous, and wars more frequent, than ever fell to any other nation’s lot. But Providence, that designed them to win the Empire of the World, so over-ruled the course of events, that each invasion, and every conflict, more powerfully developed their extraordinary energies, and their indomitable perseverance, whilst it inured them to such iron discipline, unhesitating obedience, powerful self-control, and magnanimous self-sacrifice, even to the death, as rendered the Roman soldiers almost invincible. But a merciless cruelty breathes forth in most of their acts of self-devotion, quite incompatible with true patriotism. So Tubertus and Manlius, remorselessly executing their brave sons for having engaged with the enemy without orders, although successfully; Brutus, neither stirring from his seat, nor turning away his eyes from the strange and piteous sight of his own sons, scourged with rods and beheaded by his order, because ‘he spared not his own chil-

dren when they had been false to their country'; Horatius meeting his sister, as she bewailed the lover whose blood stained his sword, and stabbing her to the heart, with the cruel cry, 'So perish the Roman maiden who shall weep for her country's enemy.' Acts like these were such an overstraining as broke the bow of patriotism, and turned liberty into military tyranny. Hence, in the bas-reliefs and bronzes of Roman greatness, the Roman soldier is ever seen as a ruthless being. The contracted brow declares that storms of battle have beat upon it often; the glare of that overshadowed eye throws contempt upon death; the inflated nostril breathes a steady rage; the fixed lips deny mercy; the rigid arms and the knit joints have forced a path to victory, through bristled ramparts and triple lines of shields and swords. And withal there is a hardness of texture that seems the outward expression of an iron strength and rigour of soul—a power as well of enduring as of inflicting pain; and the one with almost as much indifference as the other. Shall we conceive of encountering, on the open field, a being so firmly fierce, and so long accustomed to crush and trample upon man? Shall we wonder at his proud boast, that the world either already owned, or would shortly own, the supremacy of Rome? But who can unflinchingly imagine himself delivered into the hands of the Roman soldier armed, not as a combatant, but an executioner? This indeed is terror. Alas, then, let us commiserate the sufferings of our brethren and sisters in Christ—the early martyrs! What had they to look for when the centurion's band, such as we see it now encircling the column of Trajan, was let loose upon a flock of trembling victims, with license and command to torture and kill? But I anticipate: sufficient here to remark, that the cruelty which the Romans learnt in conflict with their enemies in the field, they exercised at home on their slaves and children, wives

and parents, and that the ordinary punishments of their laws was relentless.

The Pelasgian race, to which the Greeks and Romans both belong, was chiefly distinguished by such a passion for institutions and order, as powerfully promoted amongst them a reverence for law, and a habit of considering the individual as living only for the society or nation of which he was a member. This characteristic, which renders national institutions great and permanent, has also marked the Saxon and other Teutonic tribes; the Celts have been comparatively strangers to it, and we seldom find it in the nations of Asia. But we discover traces of it in the very earliest traditions of Roman story, for a number of laws, ascribed to their kings and preserved on tables of brass in the Capitol, are their sole monuments. This conservative principle, so to speak, was remarkably prominent in the Roman Senate, and in that stern foster-nurse of Roman liberty, the Tribuneship, whose steady maintenance of the national institutions as of Divine origin and sanction, effectually, for many centuries, resisted the encroachments of the military power. Notions of religion and polity, interwoven and entangled together, sunk as it were into the very soul of the Roman senator, and his habits of thought on those matters which constituted his life, were cast in such a mould of iron that his life was almost a mechanical existence, devoted to conserving the Roman institutions. Indeed, so imbued with this conservative spirit were all the colonies that they were miniatures of Rome, and ever ready to sacrifice local interests to its welfare.

This singular habit of surrendering self to the public interest, where the commands of that interest required cruelty and treachery to foreigners, in order to save 'the majesty of Rome' from humiliation, often dictated atrocities over which humanity shudders; but when it required truth, justice, and

self-sacrifice, there was often such a grand and brilliant display of those noble qualities (so seldom seen in the heathen world), as to dazzle and delight us.

Another most important element must be glanced at before the character of the conqueror of the world can be understood. The Roman regarded himself in two very different lights; on the one hand, in a strong fanatical spirit, he vaunted himself as the child of and favourite of the gods, the son of destiny, fated to rule the world, and crush all opposition by force of arms. On the other hand, he gloated with mere mercantile interest on the material gains of conquest, and regarded realms and empires as sources of pecuniary profit, with the same zest as his frugal ancestor had devoted to the industrious cultivation of his modest glebe. He remembered, on a wider theatre, how the master of the household had daily appeased the gods with corn and oil, with a hasty prayer or a muttered charm; how he had carefully fed his slaves at his own board, and dispensed to them with equal care their tasks and their recreations; how he had kept the key of the wine-bin at his girdle, and chastised his wife even to the death, if she ventured to purloin it from his side. In a character so decided this eager industry quickly degenerated to the 'accursed greed of gold,' which early displayed itself in the merciless law against insolvent debtors, who might be hewn alive into pieces, and their quivering limbs shared amongst their creditors; and in the unblushing bribery practised in all departments of the State, which gave rise to the world-known proverb—'Everything at Rome has its price;' so that even in the time of Sylla it was considered a good jest to say to the unworthy possessor of a public office—'It is your's, for you bought it.'

But a sketch of the character of this singular race would be incomplete without special notice of the overweening

national pride, to which, as Niebuhr has amply proved, is due the deliberate and shameless falsification of their whole early history. He has shown that though the intellectual faculties of the Romans were weak, and their animal propensities strong; though naturally dull and stubborn, heavy as lead, and as lead hard to be moved, and indebted to the other parts of Italy, or to the provinces, for all their able writers, except that universal genius, Julius Cæsar, yet their national pride lent such imaginary lustre to *their* ancestral annals, that when we enter upon them we are upon enchanted ground, where, although some real elements exist, yet the picture is a mere fantasy. Single trees and buildings may be copied from nature, but the grouping is ideal, and they are placed amidst fairy palaces and fairy beings, whose originals this world never saw.

They invented those romantic legends at their feasts whilst vain-gloriously celebrating the exploits of their ancestors; or, in their funeral processions, whilst they lifted their voices, not to bewail the dead, for it was not their fashion to be softened into a melting mood, but to chant his *Nenia*, or praises, to the accompaniment of the flute. Hollow, waxen busts, representing their ancestors, painted to the life, were carefully preserved in cases, conspicuously ranged in their courtyards. These were worn like a mask, in funeral processions, by their clients, dressed suitably to the rank of the illustrious dead; and the number of these 'animated busts' was the measure of a noble's rank. From childhood the Romans were taught to cherish the ambition of casting more glory upon those images of their ancestors, who were believed to watch as guardian angels over the welfare of their family, and who required them to transmit its honour unimpaired to their children. This national trait explains the intense severity of the Roman law against libel. Nævius was prosecuted

by the Metelli family, and condemned to perpetual exile, for no severer satire than his famous line attributing their consulship to fate. Hence arose that uniform habit of adulation in Roman historians, which saw even in the blood-thirsty Marius and Sylla more matter for admiration than abhorrence, and which exaggerated into gigantic proportions the deeds of their ancestors. Humility, as Bishop Porteous observes, never entered into the catalogue of Roman virtues, but was reckoned the base and cowardly characteristic of a slave.

Such were the fierce and haughty republicans whom Cæsar almost succeeded in subjugating to his despotic sway—wedded as they now were for five long centuries to the free institutions which they had so gallantly and wisely raised on the ruins of their ancient monarchy, and by which they had nearly conquered the world. We know the fearful fate of this first Napoleon; let us trace the steps by which his great nephew and adopted son, Octavius, succeeded, where he had failed, avenged his murder, and enslaved his country.

The struggle was over. Cæsar had ceased to breathe, and for a moment the eyes of his assassins encountered each other across his body, and gazed upon the twenty-three gaping wounds through which his life-blood gushed in torrents. When they looked around them the Senate-hall was already vacant, and they knew that their bloody enterprise for regaining their liberties had failed, for the Conscript Fathers had dispersed in horror, and not one remained to applaud Brutus when he waved aloft his bloody dagger, hailed the Senate, and proclaimed the recovered liberty of Rome. In the Forum, their reception was still more discouraging, as Cæsar's clemency and generosity had won for him 'golden opinions from all sorts of people.' A dull, dead calm brooded over the city, till the day of Cæsar's funeral, when Antony's



famous speech so inflamed the smouldering rage of the populace, that they burst into the Senate-house, tore up its benches, raised them into a huge funeral pile in the Forum itself, for burning their hero's body; sacked the houses of the assassins and drove them to flight, elsewhere to vindicate their deed and defend the republic by arms. The crafty intrigues, high military skill, and relentless cruelty with which the young Cæsar conquered his uncle's foes, crushed the friends whose alliance had secured himself the victory, and made himself sole master of Rome—these are characteristics of that most extraordinary of the world's monarchs known to us all. Our immortal Shakspeare has made these events 'familiar in our mouths as household words.' But the subtle peace policy with which he first formed and consolidated that system of government which for ever extinguished the cherished republicanism of Rome, and also determined the character of European civilization, is very curious and little understood. On his return to Rome, after conquering Antony, he won unbounded popularity by celebrating his threefold triumph with splendid processions to the Capitol, followed by public feasts and games; by fourfold largesses of corn to the people; by rich presents to the senators; the remission of all arrears of taxation, and proclaiming a general amnesty—a clemency all the more welcome, as it was totally unexpected from his previous ruthless character. Professing an enthusiasm for peace, he closed the temple of Janus, in token of its perfect restoration. But whilst dispersing his vast army, he contrived to post the best legions within easy distance, to place the veteran troops most attached to him in thirty-two encampments throughout Italy, and to keep in the vicinity of Rome the famous prætorian bands, ten thousand strong, as the imperial body-guard, at double pay. Two powerful fleets were ordered to cruise

along the Italian coast, ready for action at a moment's warning. Feeling himself on sure ground, he suddenly offered to resign his office of commander-in-chief into the hands of the Senate, in order 'to retire into the crowd of his fellow-citizens, and share the blessings which he had obtained for his country.' By an unanimous vote the Senate refused his resignation, and the joy of the people was enthusiastic when he, with much seeming reluctance, consented to resume for ten years only the government, as Emperor or commander-in-chief (*imperator*), with the title of Augustus, which had hitherto been confined to the temples and rites of the gods, one which scrupulously renounced the names of King or Lord—names so odious to the republican ear. The chief defect in the Roman constitution was its conferring such extravagant powers upon its officers. It proposed to check one tyranny by another, instead of so limiting the powers of every magistrate as to exclude tyranny from all. Augustus astutely availed himself of this unhappy mistake, by successively securing his own election to the great offices of Tribune, Censor, and Supreme Pontiff; and thus under the republican forms he exercised absolute monarchy by centralising in his own person the irresponsible powers vested in these antagonistic offices. He nominally left open the Consulship and other magistracies, but contrived to fill them up with his own partizans, so that long before his ten years of office terminated, he had crushed out the life of Roman liberty; and his each ten years' re-election was a mere form, which gave him the occasion of an ostentatious display of his magnanimity, by an affected desire to surrender his throne.

Throughout his long reign Augustus was enabled to maintain a system of profuse liberality, partly by strict economy and moderation in his own habits, but more by the vast resources he had derived from his conquests, especially that

of Egypt. He kept the springs of this abundance ever flowing, chiefly by gifts and legacies from the wealthiest of his subjects, and by taxation on the foreign territories of Rome, and such popular imposts on the citizens as legacy duties. From this revenue, estimated at forty millions, he economically defrayed the charges of government, and obtained popularity by his munificent employment of the people on public works, useful and ornamental, which flattered the national vanity by adorning the Eternal City with pre-eminent splendour. Augustus, when keeper of the national conscience, as Supreme Pontiff, restored and rebuilt several temples with singular magnificence. Apollo, the sun-god, was the especial object of his worship; the courtiers insinuated that their patron was inspired by an effluence from this glorious being, and whenever they entered into his presence they adroitly flattered him by dropping their eyes to the ground, as if dazzled by the encounter with his celestial radiance. To Apollo, then, he erected a superb temple on the Palatine Hill, which, besides its dazzling columns of Parian marble, was renowned for the library which he there collected for the use of the citizens. While the consuls and nobles vied with each other in imitating the Emperor in repairing or erecting the shrines of the gods, his favourite minister Agrippa cast them all into the shade, by his single magnificent temple to the patron deities of the imperial family. This wonder of architecture still stands almost unchanged from its original form and arrangements. The most conspicuous place in the interior, fronting the entrance, was occupied by the image of Jupiter the Avenger, who had punished the murderers of Cæsar; the principal niches on either side were filled with images of Mars, Venus, and Romulus, of Æneas, of Julius Cæsar himself, who was now deified and worshipped, and of other gods and heroes stand-

ing around. The courtly founder had reserved one niche for the image of Augustus himself, and when the Emperor declined the extravagant compliment as rather premature, he placed it on one side of the door of entrance, and erected his own statue as its companion on the other. Its name Pantheon is generally supposed to have been derived from its dedication to all the gods, but it was more probably suggested by its circular walls, its unusual height and the ample dome which surmounts it, reminding the admiring worshipper, when his eye, which ever way it turned, encountered a new divinity, of the palace of the Olympian deities suspended in the sky.

Whilst the first Emperor repressed by severe sumptuary laws the extravagance of the nobles, because it cast a shade over the economy which his necessities and tastes required, he cherished the most luxurious tastes amongst the populace, and strained every nerve to satiate them with enjoyments which might corrupt and destroy the lingering remains of the simple and honest, frugal and self-denying habits of their laborious republican ancestors.

In a warm climate, the nervous system is surprisingly exhilarated by the action of air and water upon the body, by the unusual lightness and coolness, the disembarassment of the limbs, and elasticity of the circulation. The Romans of early days selected the Field of Mars for the scene of their games, for the convenience of the stream of the Tiber, in which the wearied combatants might wash off the sweat and dust, and return home in the full glow of recruited health and vigour. But the youth of Rome were now no longer satisfied with these simple ablutions. They resorted to warm and vapour baths, to the use of perfumes and cosmetics, to enhance the pleasure of the refreshment. By this and other devices, they sought an appetite for the rich banquet which

crowned the evening, and at which they abandoned themselves to all the luxury of languor ; slaves relieving them from every effort, however trifling—carving for them, supplying every costly dish with such nice fragments as could be raised to the mouth with the fingers only, filling the wine-cup with choice Falernian, and pouring perfumed water on their hands at every remove.

Hence, one of the earliest modes of bribing electors was, by a candidate's subsidising the owners of the multitudinous common baths, and giving the people unlimited access to them. So the favourite minister of Augustus won unbounded popularity for his master, by constructing magnificent public baths, or *Thermæ*, in which the citizens might assemble, without payment, in large numbers, and combine the pleasure of purification with the exercise of gymnastic sports, whilst their tastes might be cultivated by gazing at paintings and sculptures, and by listening to music and singing. These *Thermæ* were the common resort of all the idlers of the city ; their name soon became legion, and from dawn to midnight they resounded with the shouts and laughter of successive troops of bathers, who, when emerged from the water, and resigned to the minute manipulations of the barbers—for the fashion of this period forbade the slightest down on the chin, and required the hair to be frizzled in long curls on the neck—gazed in dreamy, voluptuous languor upon the brilliant decorations around, or listened with charmed ear to the singers and minstrels, and even to the poets, who presumed upon their helplessness to recite to them their choicest compositions.

For the charms of music, harmonious lays, and graceful motion to melody, the Romans had always a genuine, though perhaps before their close intercourse with polished Greece, a rude taste ; so the theatre was one of their earliest institu-

tions, and the performances and expenses were provided gratuitously by the magistrates, whose first object was to seat the greatest number possible, the next, that they should be safely and pleasantly entertained. But an assembly of 30,000 spectators, gathering excitement from the consciousness of their own multitude, could not very long sit tamely under the blaze of an Italian sun, tempered only by an awning; and in the steam and dust of their own creating, allayed only by streams of perfumed water and jets d'eau rising to the height of the building, to hear the bombastic dialogue of ancient tragedy, or the dull jokes of the comic muse, declaimed from brass-lipped masks by human puppets staggering on the stilted buskin. The vast proportions of their theatres also invited grander and more exciting displays; so processions often swept before their eyes of horses and chariots, of wild and unfamiliar animals. The long show of a mimic triumph often wound its way across the stage; the spoils of captured cities, and the figures of the cities themselves, were represented in painting or sculpture. The boards were occupied during the interludes by crowds of rope-dancers, conjurors, clowns, and tumblers, who walked on their hands, or stood on their heads; let themselves be whirled aloft by machinery, or danced on stilts, or exhibited feats of tossing cups and balls. Augustus gave an extraordinary impulse to this taste, by erecting a new and vast theatre. Romulus himself, said the story of his life, had trained his subjects to war, by making them celebrate games of riding, hunting, and charioteering, in the valley beneath his cabin on the Palatine; and one of the earliest erections in Rome was the *Circus*, a very large oblong inclosure, strewn with sand, whence it was called the arena, chiefly used for chariot-racing, boxing, wrestling, and races. So passionately fond were the people of these games, that they could sit without flagging through

a hundred heats ; and, to vary the sport, multitudes of wild animals were let loose in the Circus, to be transfixed with spears and arrows. Victorious generals bringing back, to grace their triumph, from the teeming East, its strange monsters—lions and elephants, giraffes and hippopotami—first commenced this exhibition of wild beasts ; and soon they grew into deadly encounters between those savage monsters and condemned criminals, or slaves and hired swordsmen called gladiators. Indeed the eagerness with which the Romans crowded to witness these horrible spectacles, to gloat over the expression of conflicting passions, to watch the last ebblings of life, and hail with acclamations some murderous blow, or to doom to death some gladiator who begged his life at their hands, by merely turning down their thumbs—all this close to the dying and the dead—not only heightened their natural ferocity, but fostered that passion for the sight of bloody sports, which continued for centuries to vie at Rome with the excitement of the race, as an equally harmless amusement.

Cæsar owed much of his popularity to his exhibition of a fight between 320 pairs of gladiators, who flooded the arena with their gore ; and Augustus perpetuated the ghastly spectacle, by erecting a superb stone amphitheatre in the Field of Mars, the model of all the structures that bear that name. Cæsar had also laid out, at vast cost, gardens on the right bank of the Tiber ; and Augustus again surpassed him by the excavation of a noble basin by their side, for the exhibition of naval engagements, which he surrounded with groves, and walks, and gushing fountains. The old kings truly ‘built for eternity,’ rude and solid ; and Niebuhr admits that their city main drain, for carrying off the inundations of the Tiber, the Cloaca Maxima, by the stupendous stones of which it is constructed, and its enormous size, sufficient for the passage of a waggon loaded with hay, proves that there were giants

in old Rome, not myths alone. But Augustus built with elegance, always using the classic style of Greece, as well as the rich and polished marbles with which Greece abounded; and in which he was, perhaps, the first to show the Italians how very rich they were themselves. So it was his famous boast, when he pointed to the sumptuous halls and temples with which he eclipsed the modest merit of preceding builders—‘I found Rome of clay, and leave her of marble.’

Augustus was a munificent patron of learning, and so many famous writers flourished in his reign, that the Augustan age proverbially expresses the contemporaneous appearance of great authors in every class of literature. They are all remarkable for a depth of thought, a purity of taste, a terseness and an accuracy of expression hitherto unknown to Roman literature. But one and all—historian, poet, and orator—alike bowed down in adoration to the Emperor’s star, and aided him in rivetting fetters upon their country. Henceforth the Roman received from Livy’s ‘pictured page’ such a history of the Republic as the usurper himself might sanction.

From old legends and almost forgotten traditions of their kings, he made the Romans as proud and fond of the absolute monarchs who ruled their ancestors, and quite as really represented them, as Shakspeare has represented and endeared to us our own Lear and Cymbeline. It was in vain that Livy’s inaccuracies, and often his direct falsehoods, were pointed out by honest critics or jealous rivals, henceforth the national vanity must be pampered; it was treason to the majesty of Rome to doubt the eulogies on her heroes. But he dearly bought his favour at court, by the scorn he foully heaped upon the tribunes, and by contempt for the populace, who, after all, were the true patriots who achieved their country’s freedom, and to whom it owed its greatness. Hence-



forth, at every period, as Dr. Arnold complains, 'We will find fabrications of this sort—the peculiar disgrace of Roman history—often imaginative and beautiful, oftener tame and fraudulent, but always playing with facts, and converting them into a wholly different form, for the gratification of individual or national vanity.'

Virgil, too—although in his melodious numbers he, with mournful enthusiasm, describes the pristine heroism of the ancient Romans—devotes his grand epic to the glorification of the usurper, and shadows forth Augustus in his magnificent ideal of the pious *Æneas*. As for Horace, his light touch and exquisite taste in sketching off and satirizing the follies and vices of the day, were fully appreciated, and rewarded by the politic Emperor, for he desired to curtail the luxury of the few, and make the masses dependent upon the government itself for all their enjoyments. Horace richly earned the Sabine farm, of which he gives us such a pleasing picture, by his sarcastic sketches of the purse-proud millionaire, fond of parading his wealth, and sordidly striving to augment the heap amidst the smoke, and din, and vexations of city life; as much as by the attractive visions which he raises in strong contrast, of the happy simplicity and peacefulness of the rural retreat, with its sweet mid-day slumbers in the meadow beneath the spreading beech-tree shade, hard by some purling brook. Then the new nobility writhed sensitively under the sneers of the old aristocracy, whose ambition the Emperor jealously watched, and whom he was pleased to see mortified by the courtly poet's playful banter on the childish folly of deriving their distinction only from the deeds of their illustrious ancestors; and from his philosophic warnings against their expecting enjoyment on the thorn-strewed pillow of greatness.

Ovid was still more useful in aiding the Emperor's designs

against the liberty of his country. The old Etruscan system of Paganism, in its stern simplicity, and in its ascribing Divine authority to the laws and institutions of the Republic, had proved one of its most firm bulwarks. For some time the senators and higher classes had been imbibing a preference for the Greek mythology, as more agreeable to the indolence and luxury produced amongst them by the unbounded opulence which the commercial regulations, and conquests of Augustus had gained for Rome. Ovid, during his long residence at Athens, had acquainted himself with all the romantic legends of the Grecian deities, which his teeming fancy and exquisite poetic taste enabled him to present to his own countrymen in forms so attractive, as instantly to secure them such immense popularity as threw those Etruscan traditions that upheld the Republic into the cold shade of oblivion. But this imperial literary victory was dearly bought; for Ovid's elaborate details of the voluptuous scenes in which his Grecian heroes and heroines had moved, and their sensual lives after they attained deification, produced a general mental defilement which degraded to the lowest pitch of abasement the Roman matron, who hitherto boasted of 'her children as her jewels,' and of her own fidelity to her mate as that of 'the eagle that soars to her airy nest through storms and sunshine'—defilement so irresistible as to taint the laboured elegance of Propertius, the wit of Horace, and even the refinement of Virgil.

Thus the 'Imperial idea' became thoroughly master of the Roman mind, and those who so lately prided themselves on their passionate love of liberty, bartered it for shows, baths and largesses; and accepted theatres, temples and palaces for conquests and triumphs. Notwithstanding the Emperor's vigorous police regulations, that extirpated the brigands who used to roam about the city with naked daggers in broad

daylight, the luxurious indolence with which he corrupted the populace produced its natural fruit in universal profligacy. Divorces became so numerous, and so scanty was the number of marriages, that the Emperor and his councillors trembled lest the existence even of the Eternal City should be imperilled by the increasing scarceness of its Roman inhabitants. He assembled the citizens in his presence, placing the married men on his right hand, and the unmarried on his left, and great was his dismay at beholding how vastly the latter exceeded the former in number. The Emperor spoke in his most persuasive tones, and urged the youth of Rome to make a venture in their country's cause, and encounter fair brides; and, perceiving his eloquence in vain, he enacted heavy penalties against the crime of celibacy. The unmarried man was to give place in all competitions for office, of high or low degree, to his married adversary; he was to lose his succession to property, and pay a tax to government. The married obtained the special privileges of precedence in the theatres, and, in case of three children being born to him, immunity from taxes, the honours of old age, and many other privileges. 'For less rewards than these,' said the Emperor, 'would thousands expose their lives, and can they not, then, entice a Roman citizen to arise and marry a wife?' The unmarried trembled, but did not obey; so pleasant was their profligate club-life, so scandalously vile had become the character of the Roman matron. All kinds of fraud were resorted to for eluding the Pappian law which enforced these enactments. Many a man got formally wedded to a harmless child of four or five years old, in order to obtain the civil immunities of a husband, without the burden of an infamous wife; and others privately purchased dispensations and indulgences, which enabled them to defy the informers, who drove a gainful trade by denouncing celibacy.

Fortunate as Augustus was, during his long reign of forty-four years, in his public life—fortunate, too, in his admirable ministers Mæcenas and Agrippa—his domestic troubles must have embittered his enjoyments, and made him, even in the midst of his greatness, echo Solomon's exclamation, 'All is vanity!' After divorcing his first wife Clodia, he married Scribonia, by whom he had an only daughter, Julia. After repudiating Scribonia, he married Livia, the wife of Tiberius Nero, who was already mother of two sons, Tiberius and Drusus.

The last Empress was an unprincipled and ambitious woman, and employed every means for the exaltation of her own son Tiberius to the throne, and for the destruction of the family of Augustus. She fully succeeded in her fiendish schemes, and yet managed to elude the jealous penetration of the Emperor, and, by indulging his foibles, to maintain over him unlimited power.

When his daughter Julia, after her marriage with Tiberius, became so shameless in depravity that the Emperor was forced to banish her for ever from his presence—her three sons having been murdered, it was believed, by the secret agents of the Empress Livia—he fixed his whole heart on his sister Octavia's amiable son Marcellus, and designated him for his successor. But all Rome was soon plunged in grief at the young prince's premature death. Murmurs not loud but deep accused Livia as his murderess; whilst Octavia fainting at Virgil's recital of her darling's praises, and the hopes so cruelly frustrated, cast the last ray of brightness over the Roman matron. Tiberius then became heir presumptive to the Emperor, an able general who spent his days in hard-fought campaigns against the Gauls and Germans. Augustus's death was characteristic of his life. He had been always temperate even to abstinence, and his health had been

firm; so when a short illness reduced his strength alarmingly, he made up his mind that death was near. Summoning all his friends around his bed, dressed with his usual care, and every lock of his hair in its place, he turned to the bystanders, and asked, in the words of a Greek play, 'Have I acted my part well? If so, give me your applause.' Scarcely had the words escaped his lips, than he expired in the arms of the Empress.

Of all the series of medals of the Cæsars, the aspect of Augustus bespeaks most perfectly the very character of the man. The ample forehead, the deep-set eye and contracted brow, the firmly-compressed thin lips and high aquiline nose, all reveal him as he was in life—cool, shrewd, subtle—one who had never suffered either interest or vanity to warp his judgment; a close calculator of means, whose intellect grew with his fortunes; who, when the world was at his feet, understood the real grandeur of his position, and laid the foundation of his imperial throne so deep in Rome, that the storms of many centuries were needful for its overthrow.

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(See Histories of Rome, Niebuhr, i. 88-127; ii. 103, 228, 488, 547; iii. 701. Arnold, i. 25-50, 150, 253, 288; ii. 81, 118, 372, 494. Merivale, i-iv., *passim*. Liddell, i. 187, 457, 469; ii. 544. Gibbon's Decline and Fall, iii. 407 (Milman's ed.). Neander, Gen. Church Hist. tory, E. T. i. 38, 97 (Clark's Lib.). Mrs. Gray, Etruria).

## CHAPTER II.

' Who seldom smiled, and smiled in such a sort  
As if he mocked himself, and scorned his spirit  
That could be moved to smile at anything.'

—SHAKESPEARE.

TIBERIUS—CAIUS—CLAUDIUS.

TIBERIUS had been adopted by Augustus, and associated with him in the government during the last three years; had reached the mature age of fifty-six; and exhibited such remarkable activity and ability in the field and cabinet, that his accession to the vacant throne seemed certain. But the Empress Livia took the precaution of concealing her husband's death till the prætorian cohorts had taken the oath of allegiance to her son, and the last surviving son of Julia, by her first husband, had been assassinated, so that no rival remained to dispute the succession. Tiberius was all along privy to Livia's nefarious plots for his promotion, and was such a deep dissembler, that, even with the lynx-eyed Augustus, he cloaked his ambition, craft, and abominable vices under the guise of a plain, blunt, honourable soldier. At his arrival in Rome, he affected intense grief for the loss of his benefactor, and celebrated his funeral with great pomp in the Field of Mars. When the Senate passed a decree enrolling Augustus amongst the gods, commanding temples to be raised to him, sacrifices offered, and a holyday held in his honour,

the voice of Tiberius was the first and the loudest in worship of the new deity. His stormy grief and passionate devotion were lulled by the Senate's offer of the empire; but the accomplished dissembler declined the honour—the prize to grasp which he had waded through so much of blood—until he was besought to accept it 'for the good of his country.'

Both the Empress Mother and himself were thoroughly conversant with the able policy of Augustus, who, with far-seeing sagacity, bequeathed in his last will, which was publicly read in the Senate as a valuable legacy to his successors, his advice for the management of the Empire, and for confining it within those limits which nature seemed to have placed as its permanent boundaries—on the West the Atlantic Ocean; the Rhine and Danube on the North; the Euphrates on the East; and towards the South, the sandy deserts of Arabia and Africa. Then his task was made lighter by the singular aptitude of the Romans for practically carrying out the art of government, their tenacity of their institutions, and the signal success in material prosperity which attended the mild despotism of Augustus, and earned him the title of 'Father of his Country.' So we cease to wonder at the stability of the imperial system of administration, though the difficulty was enormous of keeping on the mask for ever—of giving the fair semblance of truth to a monstrous and transparent imposture—of disguising an iron despotism perpetually under the forms of a republic. But Tiberius, and all the wisest of his successors, understood their critical situation almost as well as its astute contriver; surrounded their throne with darkness; concealed their irresistible strength; and humbly professed themselves the accountable ministers of the Senate, whose supreme decrees they dictated and obeyed. Henceforth this great people, willingly or heedlessly bartering their liberty for largesses and luxuries, and all the pleasures

of indolence, insensibly lose the noble sense of free individuality which had so long thrilled in the breast of each Roman, and made him feel and act as a ruler of the nations; and their annals consist of little more than the biographies of their successive sovereigns. Their lives however are fraught with high tragic interest, and lessons of deep wisdom infinitely beyond that supplied by the history of 'the herd of kings.'

But the deceitful are always suspicious; and full of guile himself, the dark-hearted Emperor doubted the sincerity of every human being. He was painfully conscious that he could neither kindle the imagination of the soldiers like Julius, nor of the citizens like Augustus; and the memory of the murder of the former ever haunted his waking and sleeping hours. He saw an assassin in every stranger; and he who had known no fear on a stricken field, actually trembled and grew pale at any sudden movement in the brilliant circle of courtiers, who kept up around him one ceaseless chorus of compliment and homage. Indeed, he sat upon his blood-stained throne as uneasily as if in constant expectation of a crash, which he expected to overwhelm him sooner or later. A sword like that of Damocles seemed ever suspended over his head, and he scanned with angry perturbation the countenance of all who entered his presence, to discover whether they, too, saw the spectre which was never long absent from his own imagination. It is no shame to Tiberius, if his nerves were overcome by the hourly danger of assassination, a danger which appalled even the iron courage of Cromwell.

The first object of his suspicions was his adopted son Germanicus, whose generosity and gallantry had made him as much adored by the army on the Rhine, as the gloomy misanthropy of Tiberius had made him detested. Indeed, as soon as the troops heard of the death of Augustus, they tumultu-



ously saluted Germanicus as Emperor; but he generously refused the offered crown, reduced the legions to obedience, and marched them off to the morasses and the forests of Germany, where he gained several brilliant victories over the hardy barbarians who, by the slaughter of the army of Varus, had regained their independence; and reminded Augustus of the vicissitudes of life, causing him to exclaim in anguish, 'Varus! Varus! give me back my legions!' He found the remains of his countrymen exposed on the battle-field where they had fallen, buried them, and raised hard by a Roman trophy to vindicate their wounded honour. But these victories of Germanicus, and his great popularity in the army, were intolerable to the suspicious Tiberius, who recalled him to Rome, ostensibly for the enjoyment of a triumph. When the jealous tyrant observed the enthusiastic reception given to the conqueror, he trembled for his throne, and dispatched him on a forlorn hope to the far East, at the same time sending out Piso, his personal enemy, as governor of Syria, with secret instructions to countermine and cut him off.

Perhaps the grandest historic pictures of Tacitus are those in which he sketches off the generous self-devotion of Germanicus to his country, though but too well aware of the vile conspiracy against his life and honour; his exploits in Armenia and Cappadocia, and his visit to the wondrous country of Egypt, accompanied by that last of noble Roman matrons, his wife Agrippina, who, studiously insulted as she often was by Piso's wife, never ceased to share her gallant husband's toils and dangers, and cheer his path with the sunshine of her smile, till his assassination at Antioch. Piso was accused of the murder; but the investigation was stopped by his sudden death, caused, it was said, by Tiberius, who dreaded the disclosures that might be made of his own complicity. He craftily quieted the grief of the Romans for their hero's loss,

by publicly adopting Nero and Drusus, his youthful children, a deplorable distinction, which insured their ultimate ruin.

The death of Germanicus took place in the sixth year of the reign of Tiberius, and it was the turning-point of his life. Previous to that event, fear of being supplanted by his popular rival kept his evil passions tolerably in check. He observed a strict economy in managing the finances of the Empire; was so impartial in the administration of justice, and proof against bribery, that even Tacitus gives him the rough praise of being 'firm enough against money.' He exhibited moderation and dignity in his dealings with the Senate, and treated the nobles with marked distinction. He would not allow himself to be called *Dominus*, or Lord, as the style of a slave towards his master; never entered the Senate-house with guards; and rebuked a provincial governor for addressing despatches to himself and not to the Senate. His grim humour, however, would sometimes appear, to the intense mortification of the flatterers who sought to melt him to the easy condescension of Augustus. When it was ingeniously proposed by one of them to call the month of November, in which he was born, after his name; as July and August had derived their names from his predecessors; he asked, with his cold, unpleasant smile, 'What will you do if there be thirteen Cæsars?' When the people of Ilium sent an embassy to condole with him on the death of his son Drusus, some months after his decease, Tiberius 'grinned horribly a ghastly smile,' and condoled with them in turn for the death of their excellent countryman Hector. To a courtier smoothly congratulating him on the dutiful obedience of the Roman people, his sarcastic answer was, 'I have a wolf by the ears.' Now, however, he drew forth the arm of power from the fold of his specious disguise, and exhibited to the awed citizens the stern Emperor in the fullness of his

established authority. But two human beings appeared to have influence over him—the Empress Mother, for whom he felt an habitual awe, without love, to the last day of her life; and Sejanus, the prefect of the prætorian guards, a man like himself, able, ambitious, and cruel, whose powers were rendered more formidable by the military force at his command. In order to have his chosen troops—as redoubtable at Rome as our Guards at London—ever ready at his call, Sejanus prevailed upon the Emperor to take the bold and novel step, which Augustus had never ventured on, of establishing the Prætorian Camp of 10,000 men beyond the north-east angle of the city, ostensibly for its protection, but a measure productive of the most direful consequences to the future destiny of the Empire; for the soldiers soon learned that they had all the imperial power in their own hands, and could sell it to whom they would.

Tiberius now found himself free to encroach still further on the shadow of liberty left to the Romans by Augustus. He had been sixteen years a Tribune, and in deliberate violation of his oath of office, he now surrendered the slight power thus invested in him, for the benefit of the people, into the hands of the Senate. He next reduced the Senate more fully than ever to puppet-like obedience, and devolved on it the odium of his own crimes by obtaining from it a decree denouncing every offence, in word or deed, against the majesty of his person, as high treason—a crime hitherto regarded as one affecting the republic. This measure instantly called forth from their lurking-places a host of spies and informers, who lived upon the price of blood—a class of miscreants always discouraged by the honest and honourable magistrates of Rome. These wretches so systematically and boldly plied their infamous trade, that no one of rank or influence felt safe in Rome, the Emperor's gloomy suspicion

were tenfold increased by the black list supplied to him, and the Senate, to whose judgment each accusation was referred, gradually got into the habit of condemning every one brought before them, with an alacrity which passed for vehement loyalty.

Sejanus now conceived the ambition of securing the succession to himself, by cutting off all the natural heirs to the throne. So Drusus, the son of the Emperor by his first wife Visponia, was poisoned, and Sejanus secretly sought the hand of his widow. His next step was to obtain the retirement of Tiberius from Rome to Capua, thence to Nola, and finally to the island of Capri. Tiberius was astute enough to see that his retirement from Rome was a great step in development of despotism, for it made the imperial power an accomplished fact, and no longer the creature of popular caprice; besides it secured him against the assassin's dagger. The Romans, however, imputed it either to his wish to exercise in secret the cruelty and sensuality to which he was utterly abandoned; or to a dislike to exhibit to the public gaze the ungraceful leanness of his prematurely bent and shrivelled figure, the baldness of his forehead—a supposed defect from which even Julius sensitively shrank, and to hide which he wore his laurel wreath—and his countenance deformed by spots and pimples, or the patches which he used to conceal them. Capri was then an island so little frequented as to be inhabited only by wild goats, from which it derived its name, and it was only eleven miles in circuit; but it lay in the most beautiful part of the Bay of Naples, within two hours' row of Misenum, the great Roman naval station on the lower sea, whose stupendous ruins on land, and stretching far into the deep, still exist to amaze the stranger, and display the pomp and power of the 'Great City, that sitteth as a Queen upon many waters.' Capri was almost impregnable, being surrounded for the most part by sheer pre-

cipices plunging directly into the deep sea, and furrowed here and there by caverns, still celebrated for the curious play of coloured light in their recesses. From its heights the eye caught at a single glance the outline of that loveliest bay of the whole world, melting away into the whole range of the Italian coast, clearly visible through that transparent atmosphere, teeming with the noblest vineyards of the peninsula, limited by the far-off Apennines, looking so 'deeply, darkly, beautifully blue,' while Vesuvius reared its then level crest, yet unscarred by lava, directly in the centre. No cone of ashes rose then from its bosom; and cities and villages clustered peacefully at its foot, or hung upon its flanks, unconscious of the elements of convulsion and ruin hushed in grim repose above and around them, awaiting the Divine command to burst forth in judgment upon their guilty heads. The worn-out soldier and statesman had formerly visited Capri, and observed the restorative charms of its climate, the freshness of its evening breeze, the coolness of its summers, the agreeable mildness of its winters, and its happy combination of perfect solitude and difficulty of access with actual vicinity to the seat of government. Returned thither now, he erected twelve villas on the fairest sites, so skilfully as to command every variety of prospect, catch every breath of air, and receive the rays of the sun at every point of his progress. Reclining on the slopes of Capri, and gazing on the glorious landscape before him, Tiberius might dream of the fairy land of the Roman Milton's creation. We know our own Milton borrowed his ideal Paradise from the Italian Vallombrosa. He might well seek some moments of repose from the hard realities of government, and while away some pleasant minutes, as we are told he did, in perplexing the courtly Greek scholars who waited upon him, with curious questions and arithmetical puzzles, which might well delight

a Zulu divine—such as, ‘What was the subject of the sirens’ songs?’ and ‘What the name of Hecuba’s mother?’ None had courage to put Hamlet’s practical question,

‘What’s Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba?’

But the Emperor seldom indulged in these idle dreams, for a regular service of couriers day by day brought despatches from Rome, and he never relaxed from the business habits in which he had been so well trained by Augustus. He must have spent several hours daily in labouring over the political papers sent to him by his ministers; entering into most minute details, and giving his directions on every question of finance and police, of home and foreign interest.

The Empress Livia’s death, at 86, increased the ferocity of Tiberius, for her moderate counsels had hitherto some influence in restraining his violence; and Sejanus was now incessant in tracking out and destroying suspected traitors. But the Emperor’s dissimulation was as base as ever, and his complacent exclamation, ‘Now, at last, I have taken him back to favour,’ was often the first intimation of the death of a suspected minister or magistrate. Thus fell his adopted sons Nero and Drusus, with their mother Agrippina, the two latter by starvation. Tiberius details minutely, in a letter to the Senate, the miserable death of young Drusus, with an unctuous hypocrisy totally inconceivable by those ignorant of the frightful Roman notion, that putting to death by starvation was no murder, but a simple letting nature take her course, and leaving to the care of the gods, forsooth, those whom it was inconvenient or impolitic to care for oneself! They did not deem it even a judicial punishment, for no drop of blood was shed, no spark of divine spirit was extinguished by the executioner’s hand! So Tiberius gives thanks to the gods for punishing this traitor, while he shows how the poor

wretch had prolonged his life for nine days by gnawing the stuffing of his pallet, and complacently records every sigh and groan he uttered; even to the last desperate imprecations which he heaped on his tormentor's head—every syllable duly vouched by the testimony of slaves who had been set to watch his last hours. Caius, the youngest son of Germanicus, alone escaped, in consequence of his almost constant residence with the Emperor. But retribution was at hand for Sejanus. He had awakened the Emperor's suspicions by asking the hand of Livia, the widow of his son Drusus; and a letter from the aged mother of Germanicus completed his ruin by revealing his ambitious schemes, and the crimes with which he pursued them. So the imperial dissembler wrote to Sejanus a most gracious and loving letter, conferring the Consulship upon him; and by the courier who carried that letter, he despatched another to the Senate, accusing him of high treason. When Sejanus came to the Senate-house to receive the long-coveted dignity, one of the Senators named Macro arose, read the Emperor's letter, and arrested him as a traitor. Amidst loud plaudits, the fallen favourite was sentenced to death; and, as he was hurried along from the Senate-house across the Forum to the Mamertine dungeons, for execution, he had a foretaste of the bitterness of death, in seeing numbers busy in the overthrow of his statues, with ropes and hatchets. Singularly enough the effigies of their public men, conspicuous in the Sacred Way, or honourably reared in halls or theatres, often diverted the fury of the enraged populace from the originals. To crush the marble image of the detested personage, even to powder; to break up the gold or brass for the melting-pot, and consign to base uses the hated limbs and lineaments, was the first impulse of the scorn and passion of a Roman mob, and often saved his palace from destruction, and his family from

outrage. But their hatred to Sejanus was so intense that after his execution in the depths of his horrid dungeon, the populace clamoured for his body, attached a hook, and dragged it with yells of rage to the Tiber. Their fury did not abate till all his friends and relatives were put to death, and their property confiscated. Tiberius, on his island, had suffered hours of intense and restless anxiety, for he knew the boldness and talent of his traitorous minister, and when the news of the execution arrived, his rugged nature was softened with a sense of deliverance, and a few iron tears glistened on his cheek.

The bold and crafty Macro was now prime minister, and made it his first care to discover the aged Emperor's probable successor. No easy task, for Tiberius astutely kept his courtiers attached to his side, by persistently refusing to indicate by word or gesture to whom he would bequeath his throne. Still as he had named the young Tiberius and Caius as the heirs of his immense treasures, permitted them to reside in his island, and seemed to enjoy the adroit flatteries of the latter, Macro took pains to obtain influence over Caius, and was confirmed in his opinion that he had rightly guessed, when the old tyrant, whom nothing could escape, muttered one day—'You leave the setting, to worship the rising sun.' Young prince Caius was very popular, especially amongst the soldiers, as the son of Germanicus. In infancy he had been bred up in the camp, accoutred in the dress of a common soldier, and it was from the rough military boots, or caligæ, which he wore, that the soldiers gave him the familiar nickname of Caligula. The Mutiny on the Rhine had been actually quelled by showing to the troops their little pet and play-fellow. But the cruel and jealous Tiberius crushed in the little soldier that military spirit—so admirably called by Tacitus the 'virtue of an emperor'—by depriving him of his noble



mother's care, and removing him to the imperial palace, in order to rear him up in perfect subserviency to himself. So when the young prince, in the very dawn of consciousness, found himself a suspiciously-watched inhabitant of the palace, and closely attached to the person of the all-dreaded Emperor, he felt it to be his only hope of life to study to clothe his countenance, day by day, with the expression assumed by Tiberius; to penetrate his sentiments; and echo, as it were, his very words, as the very humblest of his fawning flatterers; and thus he became as accomplished a dissembler as the Emperor himself. But Caius was daily imbibing from a Jewish prince ideas of oriental splendour and despotism, which strangely contrasted with his servile station.

The course by which the Romans conquered Judea is too characteristic of their aggressive policy to be here omitted. The Republic had long cultivated an alliance with the Jewish nation, as a counterpoise to Syria and Egypt; but when those kingdoms bowed to the Roman yoke, and the Jews sought the arbitration of their old allies to compose their intestine divisions, the Roman emperor Pompeius took advantage of their weakness to invade Judea, demolish the walls of Jerusalem, desecrate the Temple, place a zealous partisan of Rome, the Idumean Antipater, on the throne, and drag off as captive their popular prince Aristobulus II., with his two sons, and a train of his subjects, to grace his own triumphal entry into 'the Eternal City.' In vain did the Jews entreat Cæsar, after his victory over Pompeius, to redress his rival's cruel policy and oppression; 'to do justice and to love mercy;' the ambitious emperor haughtily commanded them 'to submit to the supremacy of Rome.' He even placed the power more firmly than ever in the hands of Antipater, who divided his territory amongst his four sons; of whom the second Herod reunited the whole of Palestine.

under his sceptre, and by the patronage of Augustus became the foremost vassal king of the Roman world ; his court the most brilliant ; his obedience the most exemplary. He was an able and magnificent prince, who cultivated Greek literature himself, and introduced it by numerous schools and professors into his kingdom, a measure designed by him to break down the exclusive nationality of the Jews, but overruled by God's providence to the great furtherance of the Gospel. He also filled the cities of Palestine with splendid buildings in the Greek taste, adorned Jerusalem with a spacious amphitheatre, instituted games and festivals after the Roman fashion ; and at the same time tried to soothe the wounded feelings of the quick and sensitive population, by the magnificence with which he rebuilt their Temple. But Herod was one of the most cruel tyrants that ever lived. It was in his reign that the SAVIOUR was born ; and it was from his murderous grasp that Joseph and Mary carried Him down into Egypt. He had married Mariamne, the fairest princess of her times, who, as a granddaughter of the two rival princes of Judea, united in her own person their conflicting claims. History hardly presents a more tragic situation than that of the unfortunate Mariamne, the miserable object of a furious attachment on the part of the monster who had slain before her eyes her uncle, her brother, and her grandfather. Herod doated on her beauty, in which she bore away the palm before every princess of her time ; the blood which flowed in her veins secured to him the throne which he had raised upon the ruins of her house ; but her personal and political claims upon him, as well as her haughty bearing, made her obnoxious to his comparatively low-born sister Salome. So when Mariamne one day rebuked him impetuously for his barbarities, and repelled his caresses, stained as he was with the blood of her murdered kinsmen, Salome but too easily persuaded

the furious Herod, that his consort had plotted to poison him! She, the last daughter of a noble race, endured her death with such fortitude, that her admiring countrymen gave her a distinguished place in the long line of Jewish heroines. They recorded, too, with satisfaction, the tyrant's unavailing remorse, his fruitless yearnings for the victim he had sacrificed to his jealous rage, the plaintive exclamations he made to echo through his halls, and the passionate upbraidings with which he assailed her judges. They told, too, how he even strove by magical incantations to recal her soul from the spirit-land; and how, as if to drive from his mind the intolerable memory of her loss, he commanded his courtiers always to speak of her as one alive. They also observed that the sharp disease and settled melancholy, which ever after afflicted him during his long reign, was a signal and merited retribution for shedding her innocent blood. But the unnatural tyrant was not softened by this great sorrow; several of his children were put to death by his order; and, in offering an asylum to some of his outcast family at Rome, Augustus said, 'I had rather be Herod's hog than his son!' It was to a grandson of this monster, who had been named Agrippa after the favourite minister of Augustus, that Caius attached himself, and this was the familiar friend with whom he passed all the hours he could steal from the exacting jealousy of Tiberius. From Agrippa he was never weary of hearing stories of the East; of the irresponsible rule over the life and wealth of his subjects possessed by every petty Syrian prince, unshackled by the forms or restraints of a capitious or insolent Senate. He also loved to hear of the splendour with which Herod the Great had adorned Jerusalem, so as to outshine in magnificence anything which could yet be seen in Rome; especially all about the Temple, which he rebuilt and enlarged with an outer court which could con-

tain all the temples of Rome together, and which for nearly fifty years required marble piled upon marble in its erection, till it occupied the whole summit of Mount Moriah; rising upon enormous substructures from the deep valley beneath, like one immense citadel, the capitol of the Jewish nation. Then Agrippa expatiated eloquently on the magnificent palace which Herod had planted on the rival summit of Mount Zion, an abode befitting an Eastern potentate, created, not by the niggard contributions of the populace, but by the confiscation of the estates of great and powerful foes, foreign or domestic; and how it was surrounded with lofty walls and towers springing, like the Temple, from the depths of the gorges beneath, containing vast halls and ample corridors; its courts filled with trees and grass-plots, with reservoirs, fountains, and running streams—a palace, a villa, and a fortress all in one—of which Herod was absolute lord, and all around were his crouching slaves. Such was the sovereignty of which the companions discoursed; and we may trace through the short career of Caius, the first despot of Rome, the influence which the Eastern prince thus fatally gained over him. Such converse well nigh cost them dear; for it happened one day that the charioteer overheard Agrippa talking on such things with Caius, and expressing his hope that the sceptre might soon drop from the hand of the aged Emperor, and be placed in the hands of his friend, that both himself and Caius might see their gay dreams realized. The slave was a spy; and he reported both what he heard and what he suspected to the Emperor, who ordered Agrippa to be suddenly arrested and hurried to a dungeon, where he lay unheard and untried for several months. Now, at the fall of Archelaus, the Emperor had annexed the throne of Judea to the Roman dominions; and he had just recalled its governor, Pontius Pilate, to Rome, to answer the charges urged

against him of cruelty and extortion, that he might chastise him with his strong arm if guilty. So ruin stared Agrippa in the face ; for if the sleepless vigilance of the Emperor was not relaxed in dealing with the far-off governor of Judea, accused by foreigners on matters to which he was personally indifferent, what hope could a Jewish prince have who had abused the Emperor's hospitality, and might justly be condemned as a conspirator against his life ? Caius also trembled for his own fate, especially when one day, detecting a cloud passing over his countenance at seeing some little preference shown to the young Tiberius, the old Emperor muttered, ' Caius, you will kill him, and another will kill you.' But Tiberius spared him still, observing with malignant satisfaction the gross sensuality and cruel sports in which he delighted ; expecting that they would divert his mind from ambitious schemes ; or desiring that the deeper atrocity of the crimes of his successor might cast into the shade the recollection of his own. He more than once remarked, with a grim satisfaction, that ' Caius lived for his own and all men's perdition ;' that he was ' rearing a young serpent for the Romans, and a Phaethon for the universe.'

Tiberius had now reached his seventy-eighth year, the eleventh of his residence at Capri, and twenty-third of his reign ; yet so vigorous still was his intellect, and indomitable his energy, that one of his last acts anticipated that valuable axiom of modern political economists, which inculcates on the poor habits of self-support. ' If all,' said he, ' that are poor should come hither, and begin to require money for their children, the Republic would be exhausted before all could be satisfied. If no man's hopes, or fears, are to centre on himself, industry will decline and indolence increase ; and if all are to look with confidence to others for support, they will become sluggish in themselves and burden-

some to us.' The first military savings'-bank grew out of this wise suggestion. Even the leisure moments he could snatch from affairs of State were devoted to experiments on the vine and the cucumber—how to cultivate the former till it should produce no longer 'generous vinegar,' but 'mighty Falernian;' and how, by splitting the thin transparent stone, *lapis specularis*, into plates five feet long, to supply the place of glass panes, there might be secured a succession of the latter throughout the year. The luxury of forcing vegetables owes, perhaps, its origin to the fondness of Tiberius for the cucumber. But peculiarly Roman was his resolute cultivation, to the last, of the new road to fame opened by Cæsar to the Western princes—authorship. Augustus used to delight in lecturing his children and courtiers upon literature; and Tiberius stooped from his all-powerful dignity to engage in 'laborious nonsense' with the Greek scholars of his court, though his praise and patronage were but barren honours, for the slightest difference of opinion, or faintest murmur from 'the irritable race,' awoke his suspicions of treason, and froze up any generous impulse. One day, at length, he suddenly ordered preparations to be made for an immediate return to Rome. His courtiers obeyed in trepidation; but scarcely had the imperial galley reached the basin excavated in the Tiber, for mimic sea-fights, by Augustus, and scarcely had the hoarse clangor of the Prætorian trumpets summoned the trembling citizens to meet their all-dreaded Emperor, than, to the general relief, Tiberius ordered the vessel to be put about, and the three ranks of rowers at each side to strain at their oars for their lives, till Rome faded away in the distance, and the bar at the Tiber's mouth was safely crossed. Arriving at Misenum, he felt his iron frame breaking up; but, resolute in dissimulation to the last, he summoned his attendants to a banquet. As the revellers were

retiring from their orgies deep in the night, the imperial physician contrived while kissing the Emperor's hand to feel his pulse, and marking its intermittent throb cast a meaning look at Macro. Tiberius caught the signal, and, to disprove the physician's prognostic, rose from his couch and pledged his parting guests in a brimming goblet. But a lethargy seized him before the wine-cup left his lips; he sunk to the ground and was carried off to his couch, apparently a corpse. Macro lost not a moment in proclaiming Caius through the palace as Emperor, amidst frantic exclamations of joy. The uproar was at its height when an attendant rushed pale with terror from the chamber of Tiberius, announcing his returning to life. 'Heap on more bedclothes,' cried Macro. So they suffocated the miserable old Emperor with pillows.

Scarcely had Agrippa's freedman entered his dungeon and whispered in his ear, in the Jewish language, those glad words of safety, 'The lion is dead.' Scarcely had the first outburst of popular hatred showed itself in the rising cry, 'Tiberius to the Tiber!' than Caius entered the Senate-house with the all-powerful Prætorian præfect Macro, most submissively declared himself the child of the Senators, prepared to share with them the toils and pleasures of office, and to guide all his actions according to their wise directions. He then adroitly assumed the office of chief mourner, with a decent tribute of tears to the departed Emperor, and turning rapidly from the unpopular Tiberius, he spoke with warm enthusiasm of the merits of Augustus, of Cæsar, of Germanicus, and traced to those sainted heroes his own claims to the favour of the Roman people. He skilfully closed his speech by announcing his resolve to execute the will of Tiberius, and to double the donation left by him to the Senators, the Prætorian guards, and generally to the citizens, to the police, and to the legions in the provinces. So the Senate

pronounced the administration of Tiberius to have been 'fortunate;' he was even enrolled amongst the gods, a temple decreed to his worship—as 'indifference to fame is, in fact, a disregard of virtue'—and the popular murmurs were suppressed into a mute, but glad attendance at the tyrant's funeral.

Caius for eight months realized all the hopes the Romans placed in the 'son of the noble Germanicus and Agrippina;' and the love of the people towards him increased in enthusiasm, as they fondly noticed his strong resemblance to his father in character as well as in countenance. During this period his close attention to his imperial duties was as merciful as generous; general pardons, recalls from exile, and largesses or gifts succeeded each other, till the almost endless black list of Tiberius was disposed of, and his treasury of twenty-one millions was exhausted. Then came the young Emperor's dangerous malady, from which it was said he recovered indeed bodily, but with a shattered intellect, so savage and strange were his subsequent actions. His grandmother Antonia, his father-in-law, his predecessor's grandson Tiberius, even Macro, to whom he owed his throne, and his wife, and several of his familiar friends, who had vowed their lives for his recovery, were all put to death. His thirst for blood continually increasing, and his frightful extravagance requiring fresh supplies from confiscation of the property of wealthy citizens, it soon became his fiendish delight, and in fact the means of supporting his expenses, to add daily to his victims. His profligacy kept pace with his cruelty, and in both he sought renewed excitement in variety and strangeness. He was the first to introduce into Rome nocturnal spectacles, at which the whole city was illuminated with lamps and torches, money and viands being thrown liberally at his command to the populace. He was the first



of the Roman Emperors who degraded the purple, by himself dancing and singing in public, under the guidance of a noted tragedian. He also descended into the arena as a charioteer, and even as a gladiator. The Senators might sigh over this odious degradation of the majesty of the Cæsars, yet thought it safer to themselves that Caius should sully it in these odious amusements, than guard it with the cruel jealousy of a Tiberius. The gladiatorial spectacles were his especial delight; and when the number of criminals was exhausted, he sometimes compelled Roman knights, and even nobles, to combat the wild beasts with the same prodigality of blood. One day, when the number of human combatants was not sufficient, he suddenly commanded some of the spectators within the rails to be dragged into the arena, and exposed defenceless to the lions!

In the second year of his reign, Caius began to display his Oriental notions of sovereignty, in conferring crowns and sceptres on various foreign applicants—a ceremony, however, marked by the usual imperial respect to the *forms* of the old Republic. A silken curtain, then most rare and precious, was drawn across a lofty stage in the Forum, and the Emperor was discovered seated between the Consuls. He recited the decree of the Senate conferring thrones on several foreign princes, and the districts of Abilene and Cælo-Syria upon his friend Herod Agrippa, together with a chain of gold of equal weight with the fetters which had bound him to his warder, as well as a permission to return to Palestine. The exile prince quickly set forth, and on his way was further gratified with the addition of Samaria and Judea to his dominions. Eager to gain popularity in Judea for his odious name, he caused the martyrdom of James, *the only Apostle of whose death we have any certain record*; and, but for a miracle, would have cut off, on the very open-

ing of his noble career, the Apostle Peter also. His subsequent proud acceptance of divine honours, and the humiliating and loathsome disease which laid his honours in the dust of degradation, are known to us all.

Caius, his old companion, ceased not to cherish his oriental visions, even in the meanest of luxuries, gluttony; and, to outdo Cleopatra, he expended £80,000 on a single banquet, complacently remarking at the close, 'A man should be frugal, except he be a Cæsar.' His vehement ambition to possess supremacy in all things increased in his third year's principate. He had gained the palm in gluttony and charioteering; and his superiority as an athlete was quickly conceded, after he had one day, in vexation at the indifference shown to his feats, uttered his well-known exclamation, suiting to the words the significant gesture by which he used to communicate his cruel will to his headsman, 'Would that the people of Rome had but one neck!' He sought the pre-eminence in oratory, and loud plaudits re-echoed to his wild harangues to the Senate. Once a rival orator was fain to save his life by the sacrifice of his fame; for he saw the gloomy thunder-cloud descending on the brow of his imperial antagonist, and arrested it by the adroit admission of the failure of his own cause. And no one ventured to praise Seneca's style after Caius had sneeringly pronounced it 'uncemented sand.' He used to celebrate his birth-day very differently from the mode adopted at our court—by a gladiatorial combat with four hundred bears, and as many other wild beasts.

Ambitious of pre-eminence in military fame, and desirous of recruiting his exhausted revenues by plunder, in the third year of his reign he marched at the head of a large army into Gaul, extorted vast sums from the wealthy inhabitants; proceeded to Britain, and making his soldiers collect shells

on the beach, retreated with 'those spoils of ocean'; encamped on the Rhine, where he acted a sham-fight, and returned to Rome, leading some of his own German body-guard captive. But the national pride of the Roman most signally appeared in his claiming the worship of the people, and, in the Oriental fashion of worship, obliging his courtiers to prostrate themselves on the earth and *kiss his foot*! He delighted to array himself in the garb of Hercules, or Bacchus, and brandish the club or thyrsus; or even to array himself as the female deity Juno, or Venus, and present himself in the temple, and even in the Forum, for the worship of the people. From the servile Senate he obtained a decree recognising him not only as a god, but as possessing the same pre-eminence amongst the gods which he enjoyed as a Sovereign, without a rival among human potentates. The Jews alone made resistance to this horrible decree; and when they heard that a colossal figure of the Emperor was to be erected in the Temple at Jerusalem,—even in the Holy of Holies,—as soon as the abominable image could be completed by the hands of the Syrian artificers, they despatched their famous writer Philo, and other illustrious countrymen, to Rome, to lay before the Emperor their religious scruples, and avert, if possible, the wrath of the self-styled god by protestations of loyalty. Philo's account of his audience gives us a vivid and curious description of life at the Roman court at this period. The Emperor received the Jewish embassy and their Alexandrian opponents in the gardens of Mæcenas, which he had connected with the ample pleasure-grounds of the Lamias, and where he was engaged in planning extensions and alterations on a most magnificent scale. 'This,' says Philo, 'was the spot whereon to enact the catastrophe of the great drama of Jewish nationality. Here we found the tyrant surrounded by stewards, architects, and workmen;

every hall and chamber thrown open for his inspection, ranging from room to room. Being summoned into his presence, we advanced reverently and discreetly, saluting him by the title of Augustus and Emperor. "What," said he, "are you the god-haters, the men who deny my divinity, confessed by all the world besides?" and he raised his hand towards heaven with a frightful execration. The Alexandrian deputy Isodorus, with odious adulation, pressed forward—"Lord and master, still more and more justly will you hate them, when you learn that of all mankind these Jews alone have refused to sacrifice for your safety." "Lord Caius! Lord Caius!" exclaimed the Jews, "we are slandered; we have sacrificed for you; we have offered hecatombs; we have not feasted on the flesh of our victims, but burnt them whole—not once, but thrice already. First, when you assumed the Empire; again, when you were restored from your dire disease; once more for the success of your expedition against the Germans." "Be it so," replied he; "ye sacrificed *for* me, but not *to* me." The Jews were struck with *abysmal* terror, but were relieved for a moment by the Emperor suddenly rushing off to some distant apartment to give orders. They were hurried along in his train, their Alexandrian opponents 'jeering and mocking at them as in a play.' But at the next pause in his career, Caius turned round sharply, and demanded—"Pray, sirs, why do you not eat pork?" "Every people," replied the Jews, not disconcerted by the uncourteous merriment of all the Emperor's attendants, 'has its own special customs, and our opponents have their peculiarities as well as we. Some nations refrain from eating the flesh of young lambs.' "Quite right, too," was the Emperor's remark; "their flesh is bad." He then more mildly began to inquire into their national usages; but when they began to justify their polity, afraid, as Philo surmised,

that he should not be able to refute them, he rushed back to his architectural fancies. Among the wonders before them the Jews could not help particular admiration of the window of one chamber, filled with a transparent stone, admitting the light, but warding off the wind, and tempering the burning rays of the sun. Caius became so engaged in superintending the arrangement of some pictures that he hastily dismissed Philo and his companions with the somewhat softened remark—‘Men who think me no god are more unfortunate after all than criminal.’ The Jews, seeing remonstrance vain, were preparing to defend their Temple against the whole colossal power of the Empire, when suddenly the dagger of the Prætorian Tribune Cassius Chærea, whose shrill, woman’s voice had drawn forth his merriment, struck down the blood-stained tyrant, and paralyzed his sacrilegious hand, in the fourth year of his reign and twenty-ninth of his age.

The Senate instantly assembled to deliberate on the form of government that should henceforth be administered, and some feeble voices hailed the sacred name of Liberty; but while they deliberated, the Prætorian bands had resolved. In the confusion which ensued at the first news of the assassination of the Emperor, a crowd of the Prætorian guards had rushed into the palace, and were busy plundering its glittering chambers, and quaffing off goblets of generous wines. They found Claudius, the long-despised and neglected uncle of the Emperor, hidden behind a curtain. In their wildest moods still respecting the blood of the Cæsars, or perhaps in drunken jollity, they drew him from his lurking-place, hailed him as Emperor, and carried him off on their shoulders in triumph to the camp, where he took courage to promise the cohorts one hundred pounds a man, as a donative in event of his election to the vacant throne. The formidable force which escorted Claudius to the Senate-house overawed oppo-

sition; and thus he was the first Emperor who secured the succession by bribery of the Prætorians—a fatal example, which was often followed by them, until it gave way to a still stronger power, that of the legions themselves; and for them, too, bribery ever after became the rule. Claudius had hitherto screened himself from the jealousy of Tiberius and Caius by the obscurity of absorbing literary labour. The numerous medals and busts of him represent his countenance and aspect as the most interesting of the whole Imperial series. His face, at least in repose, seems eminently handsome, but it has an expression of pain and anxiety, which forcibly arrests our sympathy. It is the face of a well-meaning man, who feels himself unequal to the task imposed upon him. There is the look of perplexity in which he may have pored over the mysteries of Etruscan lore, or of his favourite digamma, carried to the throne of the world, and engaged in the deeper questions of finance and diplomacy. There is the expression of fatigue, both of mind and body, which speaks of midnight vigils over books, varied with midnight carouses at the imperial table. There is the glance of fear, not of open enemies, but of pretended friends or of his fierce wives; reminiscences of wanton blows, and the anticipation of the poisoned cup. Above all, there is the anxious glance of dependence which seems to cast about for a model to imitate; for ministers to shape a policy; for agents to execute it. His grandfather Augustus had the lowest opinion of the poor, ungainly, stammering, shambling boy who was destined one day to fill his throne. ‘I wish,’ he wrote to Livia, ‘the poor creature would take pains to imitate some respectable personage, in bearing, gait, and gesture.’ In another letter he adds, ‘You may imagine how surprised I was to find something to like in his declamation, for you know that he cannot ordinarily speak so as to be understood.’

Of all the historical parallels so interesting to the thoughtful reader, perhaps none can be found more perfect than that between our James I. and Claudius. Both had an awkward figure, a rolling eye, a rickety sidelong walk, nervous tremblings, a slobbering mouth, and boyishness of manner, which formed a ludicrous contrast with the airs of dignity and regal state which they were constantly labouring to assume. Both had the same feeble and vacillating temper, the same childishness, the same coarse wit, the same poltroonery. Both had the same ignominious fondness for minions, and were equally ruled and led by them. The description given by Suetonius of the wise and yet wavering manner in which the Roman prince transacted business, exactly suits the Briton. Both were men of learning; both spoke and wrote, not indeed well, but still in a manner in which it seems almost incredible that the royal pedants should have spoken and written. James, however, is chiefly known to literary fame by his 'Counterblast to Tobacco;' whilst Claudius must have been a 'painful composer,' for he compiled a Roman history in forty-one books; a memoir of his own times in eight; a history of the Etruscans in twenty; of the Carthaginians in eight; a defence of Cicero; a Greek comedy; and a treatise on the art of dice-playing. Claudius was fifty-one years' old at his accession, but in his ignorance of the world he felt helpless as a child; and at home and abroad, in the Senate and colonies, he feebly attempted to follow the lines of policy already traced by his subtle grandfather. Like Augustus, he issued a general pardon as his first decree; and he also sat daily, patiently and industriously, in the Hall of Justice, to hear appeals and redress grievances. As Supreme Pontiff, he swept away from the court and temples all the Oriental innovations of Caius, and expelled such foreign worship as might prove politically dangerous. The Jews

who, by the influence of Herod Agrippa over Caius, had obtained a leading position amongst foreigners and much court-favour, were treated indulgently by the new Emperor, till their domestic dissensions caused their expulsion once more for a short time from Rome. The eighth century since the foundation of Rome was completed in his reign, and Claudius celebrated it with the secular ceremonies and games, amidst universal rejoicings, although only sixty-three years had elapsed since Augustus had summoned the citizens to behold 'a solemnity which none had before seen, and none should see again.' But noticing that the increasing number of feasts and holidays threatened to degrade the Romans into indolent triflers, Claudius limited them to a moderate number. In buildings, his aqueduct and harbour excelled those of Augustus; and his gladiatorial games were more lavish of blood.

The condition of the slaves of Rome was deplorable, and more than once, particularly in the great Servile war, this despised and degraded race forced itself with fearful violence upon the general attention, and claimed a place in the sanguinary annals of the civil wars. It is a remarkable illustration of the proud spirit of the Romans, that for a long time they would hardly stoop to acknowledge the public danger, even when Spartacus, the slave-chief, had sacrificed to the shades of his slaughtered brethren three hundred Romans, and threatened Rome itself at the head of one hundred and twenty thousand men! Considering the vast numbers of slaves possessed by individuals, some owning 10,000 and even 20,000; that slaves always composed a great part of their wealth; that they formed the chief article of ladies' dowries; and that the great majority of them were captives taken in war and inured to arms, it is amazing that slave-insurrections were not more frequent, and more fatal to the greatness of Rome. So multitudinous was its slave-population, that when



a proposal was made to distinguish them by a peculiar dress, the majority of the Senate refused, fearing the danger of acquainting them with their numbers. All the domestic servants, in general the artisans, and far the greater proportion of the agricultural labourers, were in the strictest sense slaves. Such mere animals were they considered, that Hortensius acknowledged he cared less for the health of his host of slaves than for that of his pond of fish. It was even questioned in the philosophers' schools, 'Whether, in order to lighten a vessel in a storm, one should sacrifice a valuable horse or a worthless slave?' and 'Whether it were possible for a slave to confer a benefit upon his master?' Instruments for scourging and torturing slaves, whips, thongs of bulls' hide, iron collars, and still more horrible engines, were hung up in their halls and vestibules as ordinary and necessary pieces of furniture, like our stands for walking-sticks and umbrellas. Woe to the careless handmaid who did not finish off, with a nice and exquisite touch, that symmetry of curl which formed the head-dress of her capricious mistress—whose locks were not so naturally beautiful as to disdain the use of art—or who failed to touch her olive cheek with the becoming tinge of ceruse! The huge whip hung temptingly near; the great lady herself would take that instrument of correction into her own delicate hands, and the tortured slave might shriek to the unheeding air. The slave who acted as porter was ordinarily chained, like the house-dog, to his post. A visitor was sometimes treated to the interesting spectacle of the suffering of an offending slave, often inflicted by professional torturers, who hired themselves out for this disgusting office.

Incorrigible city slaves were often sent to the country workhouses, in which they were crowded together at night, to be turned out in the morning, and sent to labour in gangs, and sometimes in chains, subject to the caprice and cruelty

of tyrannical overseers. Originally the master possessed the uncontrolled power of life and death over his slave ; and it was Augustus who, either from policy or humanity, first enacted a law establishing the jurisdiction of the Præfect of the City—'the Lord Mayor'—over all disputes between master and slave. The moral influence arising from this recognition of the legislature, that slaves were not beneath its care, warded off the dangers which might have been apprehended from their numbers, and raised them in the scale of intellectual beings. We find them shortly after engaged in ministering to the luxury of their masters in the liberal arts, as well as the mechanical, and commanding enormous prices in the market. A skilful cook sold for £772 ; a witty fool for £161 ; and a luxury of a nobler kind, a set of learned slaves who could repeat by memory the whole of celebrated works, brought £817 each. A good slave-physician bore a price proportioned to the emoluments he brought his master. A good actor, such as Cicero pleaded for in the celebrated case of Roscius, was estimated at £1,614. But the real drop of sweetness in their bitter cup was the hope of liberty, which was far oftener realized under the early Emperors than under the Republic ; though the *freedman* was still kept in some degree of dependence upon his *patron*, who remained responsible to the State for his behaviour. However, the Island of Æsculapius in the Tiber still presented the shocking spectacle of crowds of sick, old, and decrepit slaves, dying of hunger, committed to the care of the gods, in order to save the expense of their support. Claudius worthily imitated his politic predecessor by an enactment against this infamous practice, which, after all, must have perpetuated the degradation of this important part of the Roman population, for his edict was only partially obeyed.

The state of the provinces occupied much of this Em-

peror's attention, and he was particularly fortunate in the able *legates* (lieutenants) who led the Roman legions to victory in Mauritania, Syria, Germany, and Britain. Of all the wars of his reign, that of Britain is the most interesting to us. No Roman army had invaded the island from the days of Julius Cæsar until Claudius undertook its conquest, at the instigation of an exiled British chief, named Bericus. He himself and his wife Messalina, appeared in person at the head of the invading legions; but his unwarlike spirit soon shrank from encountering Caractacus and his rude but valiant followers, fighting desperately for liberty and life. So having been hailed as Emperor by the troops after one victory, and having presented to them, as their future Emperor, his new-born son, whom he named Britannicus in honour of it; homeward bound, he steered for Gaul. The title conferred upon him by the army, and his laurelled despatches to the Senate, qualified him to enjoy the crowning honour of a triumph. So arches crowned with trophies were erected to him at Rome; but on reaching the Capitoline Temple, he deprecated the evil eye of Nemesis by an ungainly act of self-abasement, in shambling up its steps upon his knees.

The war in Britain was actually carried on during the following nine years by Plantius, and his *legate*, the brave and strenuous Vespasian; 'then,' says Tacitus, 'first shown to the Fates, which from henceforth destined him to the Empire.' It was on the broad plains of Old England that Vespasian and his son Titus learnt the art of war, which they were to practise amongst the steep defiles of Palestine and against the walls of Jerusalem, for the conquest of a nation not less resolutely attached to liberty. They are said to have fought thirty-one battles, seized twenty towns, subdued several tribes, and constituted the south of the island a Roman province.

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 He was permitted to address the Emperor, and reminded  
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Caractacus and his family at length were made captives; and when they were led through the streets of Rome, great was the curiosity of the people to behold the hero who had successfully maintained so long a struggle against all the force of the Empire. The Emperor gratified his vanity by exhibiting the British prince before the Imperial tribunal raised before the gates of the Prætorian Camp, where himself and the Empress sat, clothed in military garb, beneath the displayed ensigns of a Roman army floating over their heads, encircled by ten thousand serried files of the Prætorian guards, armed to the teeth in glittering panoply, and an immense multitude of citizens. The barbarous slaves and retainers of the vanquished prince were first led by, with his armour, as trophies. Behind these marched the brothers, the wife, and the tender daughter of the hero, and their wallings moved no pity in the stern Romans. But the bearing of Caractacus himself, who closed the long train of British captives, was noble, and worthy of his noble cause; nor did it fail to excite the admiration which it deserved. He was permitted to address the Emperor, and reminded him, with Spartan brevity and good sense, that the obstinacy of his own resistance enhanced the glory of his conqueror, and that if he were now put ignominiously to death—the fate of so many vanquished foes of Rome—his name and exploits would be soon forgotten, and so would the glory of the conqueror. But that if bid to live, he and his achievements would be eternally remembered to the Emperor's renown as a conqueror, and to the fame of his clemency as a prince. Claudius granted the lives of his illustrious captives; so Caractacus and his family were retained in honourable custody, and enrolled upon the list of his freedmen and retainers. Claudius so often boasted of his bravery in this foreign campaign, whilst his cowardice at Rome was noto-

rious, that the satiric Romans—alluding to his birth in Gaul, and using a play upon words, which eighteen centuries have justified of the national boastfulness—scoffingly said of him, ‘The cock, or Gaul (*gallus*), is ever bravest on his own dunghill.’

Cowardice especially attaches to Claudius in his domestic relations, for having always led a secluded life, shut up within the walls of the palace, he had no friends or advisers but his wives and freedmen, who tyrannized over him continually. They thwarted his efforts for good; entangled him in the basest measures; and even forced him to put to death many of the most distinguished persons of the time. Well might the miserable Emperor tremble before the atrocious companions with whom he lived in daily intercourse! The excessive sensuality of the Romans was the natural fruit of paganism, pampered by all the appliances of art and luxury, and raised by their overweening pride above the healthy corrective of public opinion, and all the restraints of decency and self-respect. Such, unfortunately, was the open and flagrant character of Roman vice at this period, that even the most respectable citizens were but too much familiarized with its worst features; and the historians describe it with most hideous minuteness. My readers will gladly permit me to cast a veil over the picture which called up no blush on the face of that unhappy generation, so I shall say no more of his first wife Plautia than that he was obliged to divorce her for attempting his life; and of his second wife Aelia, that she was too intolerable to be borne even by the craven-spirited Claudius. His third wife was the abominable Valeria Messalina, who went so far in her marvellous wantonness that she, the Empress and the mother of the heir to the throne, publicly married the young knight Silius, purposing to complete her guilt by the murder of the Emperor.

But Narcissus and Pallas, his two favourite freedmen, informed the wretched Claudius of her crime, and by his command she was slain in the gardens which had been long polluted by her orgies.

The feeble Emperor was now completely ruled by his freedmen, a new feature this in the degeneracy of the Imperial court, but one henceforth to be too often seen. The new power was as baneful as it was disgraceful, for in this class of favourites there was always the most complete blending of abject sycophancy to the Emperor, with despotic tyranny and insolence to all his subjects. They persuaded him to marry his niece Agrippina, a choice worse, if possible, than that of his former wives, for she was a fierce, ambitious woman, whose sole desire was to set aside young Britannicus, and secure the succession to her own son, by her former marriage with C. Domitius Ahenobarbus.

It has been remarked that a curious and peculiar interest attaches to the history of the Romans through the greater part of its course, from the regularity with which we can trace the character of families, descending often with the same unmistakeable contour of countenance and expression of features, from father to son, for many generations. In this there is a striking similarity between England and Rome, perhaps because of the existence in both countries of an ancient aristocracy, which generally, as Sir Bernard Burke shows, presents family histories of the most public interest. Hence we trace the Domitii for many generations in the Roman annals as characterized by vigour and ability, ferocity and faithlessness, derived, said the family legends, with their uniformly red beards, from their founder Lucius, whose beard the gods changed from black to red, when announcing the victory of Regillus, as a miraculous token of their presence. So the family changed their name to Ahenobarbi, the Red or



Brazen bearded; and inherited the complexion and fiery beards as regularly as the name and ferocity of their ancestor. One of them was Supreme Pontiff and Censor in the time of Cæsar; and so violent was his temper, and so faithless his character, that the refined and graceful Crassus remarked of him, 'No wonder that his beard is of brass, for his mouth is of iron, and his heart of lead.' One of the most truculent ruffians of this formidable house had been the first husband of Agrippina. He used to make a jest of his own enormities and those of his beautiful but abandoned wife. One day, being congratulated upon the birth of his child, he grimly remarked that 'Nothing could spring from such a father and such a mother but what should be abominable and fatal to the State.' The loss of this brutal father when he was but three years old was certainly no cause of regret, and his mother, with all her faults, made the orphan Lucius Domitius Ahenobarbus the grand object for which she lived. Soon after her marriage with the Emperor she prevailed upon him to adopt Lucius, to betroth him to his own daughter Octavia, and even to give him precedence over Britannicus by pronouncing him the eldest son of the Imperial house, under the name of Nero—a name formerly renowned for the obligations it had laid upon Rome; but henceforth doomed to world-wide infamy. By her influence the famous philosopher Seneca was recalled from exile, to educate Nero and prepare him for his high station. Profound thinker and elegant scholar as Seneca was, his morality was wretchedly loose, as might be expected indeed from a pagan. He could rest contented with being 'the least bad of the wicked,' whilst representing 'the struggles of virtue against the impetuosity of the passions,' as 'a spectacle worthy of the admiration of the divinities, who look down upon it with delight, from the canopy of heaven.' So he purchased the attention of his

volatile pupil to the severer studies of philosophy and rhetoric, by indulging his inclination for singing, piping, and dancing, arts which the austere old Romans had left to be exercised by their slaves, as unworthy the attention of the lords and conquerors of mankind. Agrippina next procured the dismissal of the Præfect of the Prætorian bands, who favoured Britannicus, and obtained the appointment for her own partisan Burrhus, an able soldier, who also undertook the training of the young prince. Thus Nero was early the centre of state intrigue; and incessant was the struggle for influence over him, between his mother, the Senate, and his tutors. Equally intense were his own efforts to supplant his half-brother Britannicus, the legitimate heir to the throne.

At length, Claudius discovered those intrigues; and in a moment of inebriation, let fall the boding words, 'It is my fate to suffer all the crimes of my consorts, and to punish them.' Agrippina, instantly, hastened to secure the throne for her son by the murder of her husband. The crime of poisoning was now rife at Rome; and constantly used by the Emperors to destroy those whom they suspected. Locusta, one of the horrid professors of this infamous art, has been dignified by the grave irony of Tacitus with the title of, 'an instrument of despotism.' This vile woman administered poison to the Emperor in a dish of mushrooms, of which he was very fond. As Claudius lingered on in agony, the Imperial physician, under pretext of relief, completed the work of iniquity, by putting down his throat a poisoned feather.

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(See Gibbon, i. 139, 211, 217, 219, 242. Merivale, v., vi., *passim*. Schmitz, *Hist. Rome*, 576-595. Milman, *Ancient Christianity*, i. 408, 452. Tacit. *Ann.* ii. 38. Blair, *Slavery amongst the Romans*.)

[A.D.

## CHAPTER III.

‘——— As our clouds of battle-dust and smoke  
Are melted into air, behold the Temple,  
In undisturbed and lone serenity  
Finding itself a solemn sanctuary  
In the profound of heaven! It stands before us  
A mount of snow fretted with golden pinnacles!  
The very sun, as though he worshipp'd there,  
Lingers upon the gilded cedar roofs;  
And down the long and branching porticoes,  
On every flowery-sculptured capital,  
Glitters the homage of his parting beams.  
By Hercules! the sight might almost win  
The offended majesty of Rome to mercy.’—MILMAN.

NERO—GALBA—OTHO—VITELLIUS—VESPASIAN—TITUS.

WHILST Agrippina, affecting an agony of grief, held Britannicus fast clasped to her bosom, calling him her pet and darling, and keeping him by every artifice from leaving the chamber of death, Nero was vigorously and successfully seizing the throne. Before the decease of Claudius could be suspected in the city, the palace doors were suddenly thrown open, and Nero, with Burrhus by his side, walked straight to the guard-house, was received with acclamations, lifted in a litter on the soldiers' shoulders, carried to the camp, promised the largess of £100 a man, and was saluted Imperator. From the camp the Prætorians bore him on their shoulders

into the Senate-house, demanding, by impetuous words and menacing gestures, that their chosen Imperator should be accepted as Chief of the State. The Senate, surprised and overawed, quickly yielded; and before sunset all the honours and offices of the Empire were heaped upon Nero, of which alone he declined the title of Father of his Country, on account of his tender years. His funeral oration over Claudius, and his first speech in the Senate, were believed to have been the composition of Seneca, for they displayed more graces of style, and more skilful statemanship, than could be expected from a stripling of seventeen; but they were so gracefully and genially delivered that they made a very favourable impression. Indeed, the first five years of his reign were so peaceful and prosperous, that the Romans fondly hoped the sole surviving descendant of Augustus, and grandson of Germanicus, was destined to make his reign one of the most fortunate periods of the Empire. Seneca and Burrhus were his chief advisers at this time, and at their suggestion he displayed high respect for the Senate, took its opinion in all matters of importance, and reduced the taxes of the provinces.

Meanwhile Nero's hereditary evil passions were gradually assuming a deeper dye, blossoming in vice, and bearing fruit in crime. He was passionately fond of music, and devoted his whole time to the cultivation of this taste, surrounded by dissolute actors and actresses, and a host of flatterers applauding his performances, and exciting him to every sort of folly. He often amused himself by night in traversing the streets with some of his vile companions, in search of adventures. He used to attack persons returning from supper, and even to break into shops and rob them, sometimes at the risk of his life. His ambitious and domineering mother, by her intrigues for the overthrow of Seneca and Burrhus, and

for grasping in her own hands the rod of Empire, first drew Nero into an interference with the machinery of the government, which he had hitherto contented himself with protecting from disturbance, 'ruling the Romans with a masterly inactivity.' Then followed in quick succession Agrippina's quarrel with her son; her threat to excite a revolution in favour of Britannicus; and the shocking murder of that poor youth, at Nero's order, by the hands of Locusta. Agrippina herself did not long survive; for Poppæa, an actress of infamous character but singular beauty, had now the greatest influence on Nero, and entered on a hideous rivalry with his mother, who was amassing wealth, bribing the troops, and preparing for a revolution. Nero, by Poppæa's influence, now resolved on murdering his mother. He entertained her at a splendid banquet in his luxurious villa near Misenum, and saw her embark in an imperial galley for Rome with the warmest expression of filial love and reverence. The vessel was so contrived as to sink when certain bolts were drawn; and when the shades of night fell, and the deep sea was reached, the sailors opened the ship's planks and rowed away, leaving Agrippina asleep. But she awoke and swam ashore, just before the vessel filled, and went down. When Nero heard of her escape, he sent a centurion and band of soldiers to dispatch her. 'Strike here,' was her undaunted exclamation, 'strike this womb, which bore a monster!' That monster entered her chamber to assure himself of her death, and expressed his admiration of her beauty!

Perceiving that his mother's murder had injured his popularity, Nero sought to restore it by public spectacles. He even descended upon the stage with a lyre in his hand, fancying that his musical skill would enable him, Orpheus-like, to captivate the multitude to his will. Burrhus himself stood at the head of his prætorians, disguising the sob of

shame with ejaculations of praise, which sounded faint indeed amidst the enthusiastic applause of the courtly circle around. He instituted games after the Greek fashion, called after himself Neronia. His distribution of precious gifts and rich largesses far exceeded the wanton lavishness of Caius. Gold, jewels, tissues, pictures, animals, even ships, houses, and estates, were showered down on the waiters upon the Cæsar's providence. His banquets were more costly than those of all the Roman debauchees before him. He would equip the actors, who enlivened them at intervals, with masks and wands covered with genuine pearls, and lavished on his courtiers and freedmen upwards of eighteen millions of pounds! Though devoid of the Oriental imagination which casts an air of wild grandeur over the character of Caius, Nero affected to slight the old Roman gods, and to bestow passionate worship upon the Syrian idols. He publicly bathed in the Holy Well of Aqua Marcia, to show his contempt of the fair naiad-nymph that, according to the old Roman legends, presided over its pure fountain. The priests of Astarte suddenly appeared at Rome in great force, roaming from street to street, from village to village, each band carrying their sacred image on an ass's back; and at every halt attracting the curious citizens or gaping rustics with the strains of their flutes. They danced in a circle round the goddess, with their hair dripping with holy oil, dashing incense now over the image and now over the crowd, cutting themselves with knives and swords, and dashing their own blood around them; handing, finally, a cap from rank to rank for the pence, figs, or crusts of the admiring spectators. The priests of Isis louder brandished the terrors of her cymbals, and threatened with blindness the scoffer at their mysteries, or the perjurer of the Forum.

This Oriental idolatry became now very prevalent amongst

the Roman women. The curious and sometimes awful rites of initiation into these mysterious and magical systems of Paganism; the pretended virtues of their charms and amulets; the riddles of their emblematic idolatry, enshrined in the form of brutes and monsters, half brute, half human, with which the Oriental worship abounded, supplied fierce or voluptuous excitement to their enthusiasm. They also found occupation and interest, if not high-wrought mental enjoyment, in fancied communion with the deity, and exaltation above earthly things in dreamy Oriental visions of Elysian bliss; or revelled in the veiled orgies and masquerading procession. But so wedded were the Roman matrons to the worship of their 'Mother of the Gods,' that her solemn feast of the Megalasia was honoured far above all the Oriental festivals. Indeed the frantic asceticism of the Eastern devotees excited less astonishment, and still less of superstitious terror, than the obscene mutilations of the priests of Cybele.

But Nero served his Roman games of entertainment after the bloodier fashion of his own countrymen; and during his reign, he is said to have produced five hundred senators and six hundred knights, arrayed as gladiators, in the scandalous and bloody strife of the arena. His brave and honest adviser Burrhus, for a short time after Agrippina's death, maintained a salutary check upon the wilful prince; but he was poisoned by Locusta, when he sturdily opposed Nero's determination to divorce Octavia, bluntly saying, 'If you dismiss the daughter of Claudius, restore at least the Empire which was her dowry.' The infamous Tigellinus succeeded him as Prætorian Præfect, and under his fatal influence Nero sunk into a mere cruel tyrant, timid and sanguinary, cutting off one by one the most eminent characters in wealth or popularity around him. So Octavia was murdered, to make way for the vile Poppæa. Her exaltation to

the throne was celebrated by public banquets in the Circus, Field of Mars, and other open theatres, with such infamous debauchery, that the corrupted citizens were not offended when the Emperor himself, arrayed in wedding veil, necklace, ring, and girdle, before the priests went through the marriage ceremony in his own person with one of the most abominable of his male associates.

This corruption leavened all ranks and classes. The Senate was exhausted by the destruction of its best members, or corrupted by pensions and sinecures. The people, so lately boasting themselves 'the lords of mankind,' were now degraded into a mere *lazzaroni*, in idleness and beggary; and the wealth of millions of Roman subjects was lavished upon those mendicant masters. Every day the fresh execution of some noble, and the confiscation of his property, was necessary to keep up the largesses to the multitude, without which Nero's days of power would have been few. The clients, or retainers, of the condemned nobles were kept effectually in check by this hungry crowd, yelling over every carcass with the keen scent of jackals in prospect of a feast. Then Tigellinus kept the prætorians ever ready to crush opposition, and they had no sympathy with the ancient Republic, for they were no longer Romans, but recruited from Italy; and among them, doubtless, thousands were foreigners, mercenaries, the offscourings of the provinces. These formidable soldiers were also highly paid; often rewarded with rich largesses, when occasion proved their fidelity; they enjoyed a regular dole of corn; and lived in such lax discipline, in their luxurious camp, that they were the firmest support of the Emperor, whom indeed they well understood to be their creature, as having been chosen by their voice, and guarded by their strong arms. As for the main body of the army, the legions were no longer Roman, nor even Italian, but mostly



newly enfranchised provincials ; and generally, by the jealousy of the Emperors, they were transferred from their homes to foreign and far-distant stations ; the vast distances between the camps, and frequent change of officers, helped to prevent them from uniting in any common cause. These considerations may help us to answer the question which so often meets us in this history, ‘ Why did this extraordinary race of Republicans tolerate the government of Nero and so many other imperial tyrants ? ’ Besides cruelty, as I have remarked, was a natural characteristic of the Roman ; and when he entered his dwelling and saw his chained, scourged, and branded slaves ; when he seated himself at his favourite entertainments, and beheld bloody combats of men with beasts, or with their fellow-men ;—when he smelt the reeking fumes of blood, which the saffron odours could not allay ; when he hardened his heart to the groans of the wounded, and gave the ruthless sign for slaughter on being appealed to with the last look of despair ;—when his own nature was so ferocious, he could not but feel the same glow of pleasurable excitement at the sight of death and torture, which is ascribed to the most ferocious of tyrants. Thus we may also explain the strange fact, that, in these awful times, for every murder, and for every execution, thanksgivings and sacrifices were offered up in the Capitol. Parents thanked the gods for the loss of their children ; sons for the loss of their fathers ; the gates of the imperial palace were continually hung with garlands, by the relations of those over whom the Emperor was declared to have justly triumphed ! Indeed, as Gibbon observes, the Roman Empire now filled the world, and when that Empire fell into the hands of a single person, the world became a safe and dreary prison for his enemies. The slave of imperial despotism, whether he was condemned to drag his gilded chain in Rome and the Senate, or to wear out a life

of exile on the barren rock of Seriphus, or the frozen banks of the Danube, expected his fate with silent despair. To resist was fatal, and it was impossible to fly. On every side he was encompassed with a vast extent of sea and land, which he could never hope to traverse without being discovered, seized, and restored to his irritated tyrant. Beyond the frontiers, his anxious view could discover nothing, except the ocean, inhospitable deserts, hostile tribes of barbarians of fierce manners and unknown language, or dependent kings, who would gladly purchase the Emperor's protection by the sacrifice of an obnoxious fugitive.

But in the very worst periods of the world's history, God has 'left Himself not without witness ;' and it is noteworthy that the Apostles were coeval with Rome's worst and most atrocious Emperors ; the dark, unrelenting Tiberius, the furious Caligula, the feeble Claudius, the profligate and cruel Nero, the beastly Vitellius, and the timid, inhuman Domitian—monsters condemned to everlasting infamy. A greater miracle of mercy still, was His favouring with a visit from His specially called Apostle Paul that 'filthy sink of all nations,' as one of her most able writers calls Rome. The manner in which Providence brought about that singular event, is deeply interesting and instructive. Ever since, as we have seen, the days of Julius Cæsar, a large colony of Jews were settled in Rome, and permitted to celebrate their national rites in a synagogue of their own, upon the banks of the Tiber. In common with their countrymen, they ardently longed for and expected a Deliverer from their worse than Egyptian bondage—the ANOINTED KING promised to their forefathers—the MESSIAH. Among the many Messiahs that had risen and fallen, ONE alone, it was proclaimed, had risen again. Crucified, dead, buried, He had been raised from the grave by the hand of the Almighty. On the first suc-

ceeding Pentecost after this wonderful event, the doctrines and offices of the true Christ, the spiritual Prince and Saviour, and the fact of His glorious resurrection, were proclaimed by His disciples to a concourse of Jews and proselytes assembled at Jerusalem from all quarters of the world. The stupendous miracle of the HOLY SPIRIT's effusion, in the gift of tongues, having borne witness to their Divine mission; thousands 'believed on the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of their sins; and they too received the Holy Ghost;' and 'continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.' 'Strangers of Rome' had been present, and had returned there full of the solemn tidings, proclaiming the new revelation as a spiritual, not a temporal deliverance; also the mighty miracles which stamped its Divine authority, and the holy life imparted to its disciples. These surprising statements were circulated from mouth to mouth among the Jews of the capital. Those of more ardent, more intellectual, or more tender spirits, were at once attracted by the first shadowing forth of true Christian liberty—'the glorious liberty of the children of God'—and of salvation from sin, and, like the noble Bereans, they 'searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so; therefore many of them believed.' But, by the great mass of their countrymen the Gospel was abhorred as treason to the national cause. Again, year by year, at the great feasts, some of those Roman converts would arrive at Jerusalem, and from them the Christian Church, now beginning to be regularly organized by the Apostles, would learn the deeply interesting news, that a small, but intelligent and influential society of believers in the Messiahship of the SAVIOUR, existed in the great city that ruled the world;—Jews and Greeks, retainers of the ancient noble houses, some of them clients of the Emperor Claudius him-

self, and of his minister Narcissus ; and that they were ripe for further instruction in the faith. To this godly few it was that the Apostle Paul wrote his Epistle, from the East, about the year 58. In this grand Epistle, He who knows all things, and governs all things for the good of His chosen, inspired His Apostle to meet most appropriately the difficulties of their position. To none could the statement with which it commences, of the fearful depths of iniquity to which heathenism had fallen, have been more peculiarly appropriate than to those witnessing daily its unutterable abominations at Rome. On none could the general effect of the Gospel, as given to the Jews first, the teachers of the Roman synagogue, and next to the Greeks, the proselytes, tell with greater effect. That their great and honoured ancestor Abraham having been, before his circumcision, justified and accepted with God 'by faith, without the works of the law ;' therefore circumcision was not essential ; that the works of the law were inefficient to save ; that faith in Christ, and the grace of the Holy Spirit, are the fountains and wells of salvation. None more required the rules of godly life by which they might best adorn the Gospel ; and directions for that loyal subjection to the higher powers, which was essential to their preservation from the political intrigues which had hitherto so often embroiled their impatient countrymen with their Roman Emperors. Such would be the most suitable subjects for an address to the Christians at Rome, whose conspicuous position as imperial freedmen would be naturally reported so widely everywhere amongst their fellow believers, and their adversaries, the Jews ; that, as the Apostle observes, 'their faith was spoken of throughout the whole world.' The Apostle closes with a solemn warning of their imminent danger of 'falling' like the Jewish Church, and an awful prophecy of their consequent share in its doom. 'Thou

standest by faith. Be not high minded, but fear. For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest He also spare not thee. Behold, therefore, the goodness and severity of God; on them which fell severity; but towards thee, goodness, if thou *continue* in His goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.' Most merciful was this warning to a Church surrounded by the corruptions of the metropolis of the heathen world, the city of pride, of sensuality, of bloodshed; and already entering on a death-struggle with Ancient Romanism, now risen to its highest pitch of power and majesty, of its strength and wealth; hallowed by the veneration felt for deified ancestors; endowed with so many temples, rites, and ceremonies; conducted by such a skilfully organized priesthood; recommended to the populace by its fostering the superstitious and vices most congenial to them; and supported as a useful engine of State by an iron despotism and proud philosophy. Ere long we shall have to witness the varying fortunes of that battle; and, alas! to behold the fulfilment of that prophecy.

About three years after, the Apostle himself came to Rome, a prisoner, for he had been accused to the Romans as a mover of sedition, because he preached the true Messiah; and having appealed to Cæsar, he had been brought, under the protection of an imperial escort, to plead his cause before the Emperor's tribunal. At Rome, though long detained untried, through the indolence of the Emperor, St. Paul, instead of being cast into the horrible Mammertine dungeons, or into the noxious vaults beneath the palace floors, was—in consequence of the favourable report of Festus, and the friendly centurion Julius, or by the influence of the Christians of the imperial household—merely consigned to the custody of a soldier, to whom he was chained, in the usual Roman fashion. He was even permitted to dwell in one of those numerous cabins within the precincts of the Prætorian Camp, or palace,

tenanted on hire by the imperial retainers. Hither, three days afterwards, with his characteristic wisdom and love of souls, he invited the chief of the Jews; and his efforts from morning till evening for their conversion had the result we might expect from their prejudices, 'Some believed, and some believed not.' St. Luke tells us further of St. Paul's sojourn at Rome only, that 'he dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him; preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.' But the Epistles which he wrote during his captivity, to Philemon, the Philippians, Ephesians, and Colossians, give us many glimpses of his individual spiritual condition, his contentment in his trials, and its source in a believing repose on the loving counsels of the Father respecting His people, and on the self-sacrifice and triumph of the Redeemer. None of his Epistles are warmer in their expressions of affection for his spiritual children, and of thankfulness to those 'who sent unto his necessities,' 'communicated with his afflictions,' and were 'not ashamed of his chain.' Indeed, he seems as if he could hardly find words to pour out the fulness of his love to those so dear to his heart, his 'beloved and longed for,' his 'joy and crown.' We see how such a heart, penetrated to its depths by the Spirit of God, could love. We can here see, when that feeble frame, crushed by numberless trials to the very verge of the grave, shaken with fightings and fears, burning with indignation at every man's offence, and weak with every man's infirmity; his 'spirit stirred in him when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry,' had yet its sweet refreshments and calm resting-places of affection. From those noble Epistles, too, we can form some idea how deep must have been his peace, how ample and how clear his fresh springs of

life and joy in Him of whom he wrote, 'I live, and yet not I, but Christ liveth in me;' and of whose abiding power within him he felt, as he tells his Philippians, 'I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.' It is generally believed that his First Epistle to Timothy and that to Titus were written after his trial had taken place, probably during a visit to Spain. From his Second Epistle to Timothy, it appears that he had a narrow escape at the terrible tribunal of Nero. 'At my first answer,' he says, 'no man stood with me, but all men forsook me. I pray God that it be not laid to their charge. Notwithstanding, the Lord stood with me and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear; and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.'

Scarcely had Paul turned his back upon the abominations which steeped in the same fearful guilt the people and the prince, than God visited Rome with an awful punishment, which almost overwhelmed it, like the Cities of the Plain, in a sheet of retributive fire. Crowded as were the close, wooden houses of the mass of the citizens, fires were of frequent occurrence; but the greatest of all broke out on the 19th of July, A.D. 64. It began in the valley between the Palatine and Capitoline hills, in a block of wooden booths, and stores filled with combustible articles, and by the force of a strong east wind, its flames swept on through the city with a furnace-fury that crumbled brick and stone like paper. Amidst the horror and confusion of the scene, the smoke, the blaze, the scorching heat, the uproar, and the din, with half the vast population, bond and free, cast loose and houseless in the streets, ruffians were seen to thrust blazing torches into the houses, who vociferated when seized by the outraged owners, that they were 'acting by orders.' The flames subsided after raging six days, and the wretched outcasts were

beginning to take breath, and visit the ruins of their dwellings, when a second fire broke out in a different quarter, and swept along, the wind now blowing fiercely from the north-west, for three days more, through the streets and buildings, in valleys between the Quirinal and Viminal hills, and on their summits, consuming alike shrines and temples of the gods, palaces and porticos of the nobles, and cabins and dwellings of the people, with such terrible havoc, that of the fourteen regions, or quarters, into which Augustus had divided the city, three were entirely destroyed, seven were more or less desolated, and four only escaped unharmed. Many were the monuments, and temples, and palaces, famous as memorials of the ancient families and glories of the Republic, which sank in the common ruin. Many a master-piece of the Grecian pencil or chisel was destroyed by the devouring flames, with trophies, images, family devices, and writings and records of inestimable value. Amidst all the splendour with which Rome afterward rose from her ashes, the few old patriots still to be found in her mourned bitterly over the irreparable loss of these ancient memorials, which was the more deplorable at a moment when the heads of the old families were falling so fast by the sword, and their domestic traditions—so interwoven with the Republic and its liberties—were so fast dying away. It was rumoured that Nero had watched the conflagration from the towers of his Mæcencian villa, chaunting to his lyre, as each great sheet of fire rose into the sky, that doleful dirge, the ‘Sack of Troy.’ It was remembered bitterly, that when the line of the tragedy quoted by the gloomy tyrant Tiberius, ‘After my death perish the world in fire,’ was recited to Nero, that his fiendish reply was, ‘Nay, in my life time!’ Accordingly whatever favour the populace had hitherto entertained towards the prince for his largesses, shows and banquets, vanished



away, and was succeeded by a fierce spirit of revenge which thirsted for his life-blood.

Nero only extricated himself from his perilous position, by charging with the crime a suspected and hated body of strangers in Rome, 'to whom the vulgar gave the name of Christians.' This name, says Tacitus, 'was derived from one Christus, who was executed in the reign of Tiberius by the procurator of Judea, Pontius Pilate. They were convicted, not so much on the charge of burning, as for their general hatred to mankind. Those only were first arrested who avowed themselves of that sect, afterwards a vast number discovered by them, who were convicted. Their execution was accompanied with mockery; they were wrapped in skins to be torn in pieces by dogs, or crucified and thus set on fire to serve as torches by night. Nero lent his own gardens for the spectacle (on the slope of the Vatican). He gave a chariot race on the occasion, at which he mingled freely with the multitude in the garb of a driver, or actually holding the reins. The populace however turned, with their usual levity, to compassion for the sufferers, justly odious though they were held to be; for they felt it was not for their actual guilt, nor for the common weal that they were punished, but to glut the ferocity of a single tyrant.'

The opinions of historians widely differ on this event. The general idea is, that incautious or misinterpreted expressions of the Christians themselves, when they beheld the Babylon of the West wrapped in one vast sheet of destroying flames, might have been reported to Nero, and given him the desired means of extricating himself from his danger, by their seizure and sacrifice. With fiendish ingenuity to make their punishment correspond with their crime, he then caused them to illuminate the city at night, by enveloping their bodies in a mass of fire. But Mr. Merivale suggests that

the suspicions of the Roman mob were directed against the turbulent Jews, notorious for their constant expectation of a Messiah or Christ, as their leader and deliverer; and that when seized those fanatics sought to implicate a few of the true Christians, known and hated by them with the animosity so strongly marked in the Acts of the Apostles, and that this frightful attack fell only obliquely on the true Christians, and that it was as transient as sudden; the seditious Jews being the chief sufferers. This would seem highly probable, because of the recently discovered *Columbarium* of the Emperor Claudius. This was a chamber built in the garden or courtyard of some great family; furnished with niches, disposed round the walls in horizontal rows, giving it the appearance of a dove-cote, in which were deposited urns containing the ashes of the burnt bodies of the owner, his freedmen, and favourite slaves; the name of each being inscribed over his respective urn. Now many of the names still clearly visible over those niches of the Columbarium of Claudius, occur in the salutations of St. Paul to his fellow-countrymen in the Capital, in his Epistle to the Romans; or in his Second Epistle to Timothy. Some, as Hermias and Nereis, connected with the Claudian family; others, as Tryphæna and Tryphosa, with the Valerian, that of Messalina; others, as Crescens, Philetus, Hymenæus, mentioned as Cæsar's freedmen; others again, as Philologus and Amplias, occurring independently. Hence it would seem that many leading disciples whom St. Paul greeted died quietly in their beds, and received honourable burial. Besides in his Second Epistle to Timothy, written from Rome within two years of this date, St. Paul makes no allusion to the recent death of any disciple, but speaks generally of the duty of meeting afflictions with Christian courage. So it was probably amongst the Jewish fanatical followers of the 'false Christs'

predicted by our SAVIOUR, that Nero's persecution chiefly and in its full fury raged.

But a more interesting inquiry here engages our attention. Is the story true that tells of the martyrdom of the Apostles Peter and Paul at Rome, in a second persecution by Nero? The last Epistle just quoted, which we have from the noble Paul's heart and hand—the 2nd of Timothy—contains passages which are pleaded in support of the popular rumour of his martyrdom about this period. We thus incidentally learn that the Apostle's second captivity at Rome was much more rigid than the first; that he no longer 'dwelt in his own hired house'—known and free to all—for he speaks of his benevolent friend as having 'sought him out very diligently before he found him.' Then a foretaste of quick coming bliss might appear in the lofty martyr-spirit in which he proclaims himself 'ready to be offered up, and the time of his departure at hand'; in his triumphant assurance of having 'fought a good fight, finished his course, and kept the faith;' and in his felt nearness to 'the prize of his high calling of God in Christ Jesus—the crown of righteousness.' But with these same blessed assurances he had cheered the hearts of the sorrowing Elders of Ephesus about seven years before; they were now well calculated to comfort the afflicted Timothy; and they are still vouchsafed by our sympathizing SAVIOUR to His tried and toil-worn ministers in every clime.

Eusebius and Origen are the chief ancient authorities for the support of this story; but a careful examination of their words convinces me that they state it not as a certain fact, but as 'received from the ancients,' a mere old rumour. Besides the learned Bunsen points out that they were 'entirely men of the East, and their literary knowledge of the Western Church in the second and third centuries was noto-

riously most defective.' But we learn from those and other ancient writers the important facts that the *first bishop of Rome* was Linus, probably the disciple mentioned by St. Paul to Timothy; that the second was Cletus; and the third was Clement, probably him described by St. Paul to the Philip-pians, as his 'fellow-labourer.' Bunsen admits that Clement 'though he had neither the spirit of an Apostle nor vocation of an Evangelist, nor the speculative aspirations of the beloved disciple of whom he was the practical complement—the *man of government*—was a man of good and deep practical sense, and the best authority on this subject.' About ten years after the time assigned by the legends to the martyrdom of the two Apostles, there was great confusion in the Church at Corinth, where the congregations thought fit to supersede some aged ministers by young ones, notwithstanding their protests that they had their office for life by the express directions of the Apostles. Clemens, then bishop of Rome, in a very sensible and pious letter strongly advises them to respect the well-founded rights of those venerable ministers; and to stand by the Apostolic principle that presbyters are for life; and not to be wantonly deposed by their congregations. This letter was not reckoned inspired by the early Christians; but it was for a long time read with the Scriptures in their congregations, consequently great interest attaches to it as containing the earliest opinions on this question. Clement is not dictatorial in the least; but refers with touching humility to the Holy Scriptures and the Apostles' example for their guidance; and he assumes no authority in the case as a ruler or judge. His Epistle opens thus:—'The Church of God at Rome to the Church of God at Corinth, elect, sanctified by the will of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord: Grace and peace from the Almighty God, by Jesus Christ, be multiplied unto you.' After prais-

ing their order and piety before the schism, he points out envy and emulation as the cause of all their strife and disorder. He then proves this position by the examples of Cain and Abel; Jacob and Esau; Joseph and his Brethren; Aaron and Miriam, Dathan and Abiram against Moses; Saul and David; and then follows his famous allusion to the Apostles:—‘But not to insist upon ancient examples, let us come to those worthies that have been nearest to us; and take the brave examples of our own age. Through zeal and envy the most faithful and righteous pillars of the Church have been persecuted even to most grievous deaths. Let us set before our eyes the holy Apostles. Peter by unjust envy underwent not one or two, but many sufferings, till at last being martyred, he went to the place of glory that was due unto him. For the same cause also did Paul in like manner receive the reward of his patience. Seven times he was in bonds; he was scourged, was stoned. He preached both in the East and in the West, leaving behind him the glorious report of his faith. And so having taught the whole world righteousness, and for that end travelled even to the utmost bounds of the West, he at last suffered martyrdom by the command of *the Governors*, and departed out of the world, and went into his holy place, having become a most eminent pattern of patience unto all ages.’

Hence the story of St. Paul’s being beheaded at Rome in Nero’s reign rests probably on this statement of Clement; and because Clement was himself Bishop of Rome, it was hastily assumed that Rome was the place of his martyrdom. ‘But surely,’ as Mr. Merivale observes, to translate ‘*under the Governors*’—the ordinary title of the Roman provincial rulers—as “under the Præfect of Rome,” is a most monstrous extravagance!’

Count de Gasparin asks, ‘Who can believe that *Peter*

was Bishop of Rome, after having read the letter written at that place by Clement, the contemporary and disciple of the Apostles, and also himself the third of the bishops there?"

There is an exceedingly curious work still extant, a pretended biography of bishop Clement, probably written by some Alexandrian Christian of the following century, and it casts a strong light on this important question.

That earliest Christian romance is written in Greek, and its groundwork is that so common in Greek novels; adventures of persons cast away at sea, and sold into slavery; lost children by strange accidents restored to their parents, husbands to their wives, and long-separated lovers suddenly reunited. Clement, its hero, sets forth on his travels as a heathen philosopher in search of truth, becomes the companion of St. Peter, witnesses his conflict with Simon Magus, hints at a second antagonism between St. Peter and St. Paul, as the Apostle of Christianity *with* the Mosaic Law against the Apostle of Christianity *without* the Mosaic Law, and after encountering many moving accidents by flood and field, and passing through many amusing scenes amongst the middle and mercantile classes, Clement closes his career in the novel by succeeding Linus the first bishop of Rome, and becoming a model bishop. The popularity of the 'Clementina' is shown by its numerous versions and editions; so it must represent the opinions of a very large party in Rome; and its estimate of St. Peter's rank and influence, doctrine and history, must have been that which then prevailed there. Its author must also have been a Judaizing teacher, from his many brief, covert, and sarcastic innuendoes against St Paul; and, as it is his aim to exalt St. Peter as the head of his own party, if there had been the slightest excuse for his claiming Peter as the Founder and First Bishop of the Roman Church, he would have eagerly grasped at it. And yet, he lays the

scene of all St. Peter's labours entirely in the East, never alludes to his having ever once visited Rome, and represents him as bowing to the authority of James the Bishop of Jerusalem with the most submissive reverence. So, as Dean Milman remarks, whilst in no part of the authentic Scripture the slightest allusion occurs to St. Peter's connexion with Rome, this curious old forgery shows that the story originated *later* than the days of Clement himself. Surely the fact that in St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, and in all his epistles from the city itself, during the very period preceding the alleged martyrdom, there is not one allusion to St. Peter, is quite conclusive that 'that great Apostle of the Circumcision' *never visited Rome*, but confined his labours to the East, where the Jews abounded in such vast numbers, that even in the time of Cæsar it was esteemed good service to the State, when the Roman Governor of the province of Asia forbade them to drain the country of gold, by sending their annual contribution, amounting to a single drachma each, to the Temple at Jerusalem. Then St. Paul, in announcing to the Romans his desire 'to preach the Gospel to them at Rome also,' distinctly assumes, that *no other Apostle* had any claim to that sphere of ministerial action, by expressing his resolution, 'not to build upon another man's foundation.' Of St. Peter, in fact, we only know that on his missionary tours he travelled with his wife (1 Cor. ix. 5); that he settled successively at Jerusalem, Antioch, and Babylon; and that from the latter city, of which some part was then standing, he wrote his Epistles. It is also related by Clemens of Alexandria of St. Peter, that on 'seeing his wife led away for martyrdom, he was delighted on account of her calling and return to her country, and that he cried to her, in a consolatory and encouraging voice, "O thou, remember the Lord!"'

Nero, perceiving that the spent wave of his persecution

was recovering sufficient force to sweep himself away, made haste to arrest it by vigorously pressing forward the rebuilding of the city. In all his tastes he was Grecian, and his architects were quickly ready with their plans for a magnificent reconstruction of the public buildings of the city, after the fashion of Athens. Even the dwellings of the people were rebuilt at the expense of the treasury, according to their designs ; and the narrow winding lanes, which crept along the hollows at the foot of the seven hills, thronged with high unsightly masses of wood-work, were replaced by regular and handsome streets, which completely changed the external appearance of the city. Nero seems to have been a man of much greater taste and accomplishments than historians have been willing to allow. To punish the tyrant for his cruelty, they have denied him when dead the praise which, above all else, he coveted when alive. Tacitus says that the ruins of Rome, after the fire, let in views of the distant country, and supplied bold masses of background, which pleased his cultivated taste. To enjoy this new pleasure he built a palace on the Vatican Hill, and surrounded it with what has been since called a landscape. So to this worst of the Roman Emperors we owe the origin of landscape gardening. The new palace was called Nero's Golden House, from the gorgeous decorations by which it was distinguished. Outside, it was adorned with all the luxury of art and taste in their highest perfection, with gilded roofs, sculptured friezes, and panels of many coloured marbles. Within it was a rich museum of painting, precious stones, and statuary. The ancient Romans always supped in the vestibule or porch of their houses ; but when the rapidity of their foreign conquests caused their peasant-life to be dissolved into luxury, there was a sudden change from the beechen bowl to the golden cup studded with gems, and grand banquetting-rooms



superseded their modest halls. Lucullus had several of these, each distinguished by the name of some god, with its own particular rate of expense. When Cicero and Pompeius thought to surprise him one night, he turned the tables by quietly telling a slave, that the cloth should be laid in the Apollo. But Nero's banquetting-room cast all into shade, for, by ingenious machinery, the partitions, floors, and ceilings were wheeled round so as to imitate the revolution of the heavens, and the different changes of the year, which changed at every service, and showered down flowers, essences, or fruits, upon the delighted guests. When he at last took possession of his golden house, Nero complacently remarked, 'that now he was lodged as a man should be.' A lottery was one of the chief amusements of the festival held in honour of Saturn by the ancient Romans, and Nero gained much popularity by reviving it on so grand a scale that a thousand tickets were distributed daily, and many of the winners gained rich prizes, of slaves, ships, houses, and lands. The volatile Emperor now suddenly paused in his wild career to devote all his resources to cultivate the art of magic, and 'failed, for,' says Pliny, 'Nature was too strong for him.' However, he wore a little image of a girl as a talisman, and pretended to learn from it the secrets of futurity.

But vast exactions and confiscations were required to defray this enormous expenditure, and Nero invoked the science of the poisoners who traded in Locusta's vile arts; then the courage of the miserable nobles quailed completely before 'the pestilence that walketh in darkness.' Even his tutor Seneca fell a sacrifice to the 'accursed greed of gold,' which would not spare his accumulated hoards; but his grateful pupil allowed him the favour of putting himself to death by opening his veins. Shortly after he had brutally murdered his wife Poppæa, Nero proceeded to Naples, where he exhibited himself

publicly on the stage, as a musician and singer; and being excessively gratified by the vehement applause that followed his performance, set off for Greece, 'starring' through the provinces, where the sister Muses dwell; and where, says Homer,

'By turns the nine delight to sing.'

Greece enthusiastically welcomed the musical Emperor; for whilst it was the proud boast of the Roman, 'Where I conquer there I inhabit;' the Greek gloried in saying, 'Where I inhabit there I civilize.' Both nations believed that music was the most certain means of keeping the natural ferocity of man in order. Certainly music is in herself the most innocent of all companions; she cannot wound and she cannot defile; she is not pure to the pure only, she is pure to all; she alone enjoys the glorious disability of expressing a single vicious idea, or of inspiring a single corrupt thought. But music never makes men *think*; and that way lies mischief, for over indulgence in her fascinations induces indolent, dreamy habits. Besides,

'If Music and sweet Poetry agree,  
As needs they must, the sister and the brother,

we can understand how mischievous also music might become in this combination, and how a stream of the mingled melody of music and voluptuous verse might have 'wrapt in an Elysium' of luxurious langour those 'Isles of Greece where burning Sappho loved and sung.' Hence her melodious gifts were scorned by the fierce Romans; and the stern Spartans issued their singular decree, by which a celebrated musician was driven from their land, for having given an additional string to the lyre. Hence the fine which in their warlike days the Athenians imposed on one of their tragic authors who had

drawn too freely upon their tears and less manly emotions, by a peculiarly plaintive dirge. To define what Greek music was, has baffled the scrutiny of our antiquaries. Some suppose that the Greek chorus was the mere sing-song enhancement of that luxurious pleasure which all Orientals take in story-telling or verse-reciting, by a musical rise or fall of voices in a lively or a doleful strain. But this notion ceases to appear likely, when we consider the wonderful richness and exquisite modulation of even the prose of their most copious and beautiful language, which held music, as it were, in such close embrace as to have moulded her into her own delicate harmony. Dr. Mosely has suggested the highly ingenious theory, that the Russian horn-band music may have been borrowed, with many other things, from the ancient Greeks, whose music consequently consisted in giving one note to each performer, thus producing the sublime harmony of an immense organ, of which the meagre skeletons of ancient music that have been handed down to us would give no idea. However this may be, Nero spent nearly two years in his Grecian progress; travelling from one haunt of the Muses to another; and vanquishing all the musicians and singers, actors and charioteers who presumed to compete with him for prizes at the great Olympian and Isthmian games. One singer whose vanity or honesty caused him to excel the Emperor, paid dearly for his distinction by the loss of his life. But the enthusiasm of the Greeks for their accomplished Emperor soon abated, when he began to levy contributions on all the cities through which he passed, and plundered their temples of everything valuable. The disaffection amongst the soldiers, who had at length discovered the fatal secret of the Empire, that a prince might be created elsewhere than at Rome, and had saluted as Emperor Galba, the governor of Spain, rudely broke this dream of shadowy suc-

cesses; and Nero suddenly returned to the seat of government. But the indignation of the troops rose tenfold when they saw their Emperor, on entering Rome, celebrating his artistic victories with all the solemnities accorded to the most famous of their generals when returning victorious from the battle-field. He made his triumphal entry in the very chariot in which Augustus had triumphed, drawn by a team of milk-white horses, with the flute-player Diodorus at his side; arrayed in a purple robe, and a mantle blazing with golden stars, wearing on his brow the Olympian coronal, and waving the Pythian in his hand. He was preceded by a long train of attendants in white, bearing aloft his other prize-chaplets, and proclaiming in musical cadence all the titles of his other victories. He was followed by five hundred knights, re-echoing the strain of the Emperor's praises with loud and measured acclamations, as the soldiers who shared his glory. The procession passed on through the city to the temple of Apollo on the Palatine. The sacrifice of victims, the flinging of incense, and every accompaniment of a military triumph were duly observed in this mock solemnity. The statues of the Emperor were decked with crowns and lyres; the people as they received his rich largesses, hailed their hero with the titles of Nero-Apollo, and Nero-Hercules, invoking his divine voice, and pronouncing all who heard it blessed. After the regular usage the triumph closed by striking medals of Nero, to the burning shame of the soldiers, in the garb of a flute-player. But his hundred days in Italy drew rapidly to a close; for the discontent in the army spread to the populace, when an Alexandrian ship arrived at Ostia, laden not with grain to supply the dearth of provisions in the city, but with fine sand for the Emperor's wrestlers in the Amphitheatre. Nero bowed to the storm, and took flight in disguise towards the villa of his freedman Phaon. On the road thither he

was recognized by a prætorian when his horse started at a dead body; thunder and lightning, and an earthquake shock, adding horror to the moment. At the villa, a slave of Phaon showed him a decree of the Senate, proclaiming him an enemy, and sentencing him to be executed in the ancient fashion—to be stripped, his head placed in a cleft stick, and his body to be smitten with a stick till death. Horrified at such a doom, he took two daggers from his bosom, looked wistfully at them, and laid them aside; once and again reproaching himself for his timidity. Suddenly the tramp of horsemen despatched to take him alive was heard in the distance. Then at last he placed a dagger to his breast, and the slave drove it home. So perished the last of the race of the great Dictator. But his name had been now, for nearly a century, inseparably connected with the imperial dignity, and the title of Cæsar has ever since been preserved by a long succession of Emperors—Romans, Greeks, French, and Germans—from the fall of the Republic to the present time. The sacred title of Augustus has always been given to the monarch, whilst that of Cæsar has been communicated to his relations, especially to the heir of the throne. Nero's body was privately buried by his faithful freedman. The memory of Nero long survived in Rome his short life of thirty-two years, and shorter reign of fourteen; for Suetonius tells us he was so highly held in honour by the populace, that, during half a century after, and under the best princes that Rome ever saw, unknown hands continued to deck his tomb with flowers. Centuries, too, after his miserable death, the Christians of the Empire cherished the notion that Nero was the Antichrist; and they expected him to return in power from the Euphrates.

It is a singular characteristic of the Romans, perhaps to be accounted for by their extraordinary tenacity in following the

precedents set them by great leaders, that their rulers, whether Emperors or Popes, come in groups of strongly-marked similarity.

We have now seen the last of the literary Emperors, and enter upon a series of military Cæsars. Sergius Sulpicius Galba, the first of the new group, was a veteran general, whose military genius, even in boyhood, attracted the notice of the far-seeing Augustus, who is said to have foretold that he would one day fill the imperial throne. Suetonius gives a full account of the hard campaigns and rigid civil administration in Gaul and Germany, Africa and Spain, by which Galba retained those provinces under the Roman yoke, even during the misgovernment of Caligula and Nero. As soon as his friends at Rome discovered that Nero had despatched orders for his execution, as a suspected person, they sent secret information to him by a courier, who 'rode for his life,' outstripped the imperial messengers, and enabled Galba to save his head by proclaiming himself lieutenant of the Senate, and of the Roman people. The severity and parsimony of Galba were so notorious, that he was very coldly received by the populace of Rome; and his caustic saying, 'That he was wont to choose soldiers, not to buy them,' made him many enemies in the Prætorian Camp. He was in his seventy-third year, and, desirous of aid in the toils of government, he wished to associate with himself a young patrician of high promise named Piso. It was in the sixth month of his reign, and in a storm of rain and thunder, such as in the olden time would have deterred the Consuls from holding a public assemblage, that the stern Emperor, with military brevity, announced to the Prætorian Guards his election of Piso as his colleague, without the expected promise of a largess. The soldiers were furious at the disappointment, they feared his rigid discipline, and suddenly

revolted in favour of Salvius Otho, a descendant of the ancient kings of Etruria, who had been a favourite of Nero, and Governor of Pannonia. Galba and Piso were slain in the revolution, and the Prætoriana, who now had an Emperor of their own choice, appointed their own commander, and made Flavius Sabinus, the brother of Vespasian, the Præfect of the City. But the Germanic legions had proclaimed their commander Vitellius as Emperor, who, after a dreadful struggle, was victorious. Otho slew himself in the fourth month of his reign, and the successful general entered Rome in triumph.

Vitellius has been painted as 'a hog' by Tacitus; so we leave him, during his eight months' reign, to his disgusting gluttony, and turn to his famous successor Vespasian.

He was of an obscure family; had no illustrious images in the modest hall of his ancestors; but he had passed many long years in active warfare, performing noble exploits, and earning triumphal decorations. So, though he had more than once offended Nero by the bluntness of his manners, and had not always kept awake through the Emperor's exhibitions of singing, harping, and acting; yet, as soon as disturbances began to rise in Palestine, his military qualities obtained him the government of that important province, and the command of the forces soon to be called into action there.

Palestine, a country now chiefly distinguished by its arid mountains and barren plains, was, as we know from sufficient evidence, enabled formerly, under the blessing of the Almighty, to crown its rocks with mould and cover its sands with verdure, till it became indeed 'a land flowing with milk and honey, the glory of all lands;' and every corner of it was engaged in raising food for man, and wide-spread commerce on either sea, supplied the requirements of her immense and prosperous population. But her rebellion against the

King of kings reduced her from this palmy state; torn by domestic divisions and oppression she became the spoil of Eastern conquerors for many years; and finally fell a prey to the Roman eagles. Gallant was the struggle of the Jews against the Roman yoke, though they enjoyed a large measure of civil and religious liberty, under the rule of the Roman procurators, who were called 'the Governors' on account of their power of life and death. Cæsarea was the general residence of those officers, but on great festivals, or when any tumult was apprehended, they repaired to Jerusalem, with a strong detachment of troops to keep order. The exactions and cruelties of some of those 'Governors,' especially of Felix and Florus, exasperated the proud and sensitive Jews beyond endurance. But their sufferings strengthened rather than weakened their national faith, for their repetition of the Psalms and prophecies, day by day, charmed away the advances of despair and despondency; they cherished a vivid hope of a Royal Deliverer, elected and anointed by JEHOVAH to save their country. Alas! in their carnal reception of prophecy they had in the time of Tiberius rejected their spiritual Prince and Saviour, with all truth and godliness, in the person of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. So now judiciously abandoned to their own passions, and the ruin which awaited themselves and their doomed city, they were ready at a summons to follow the banner of Theudas and many other brigand chiefs, who claimed to be Messiahs—the 'false Christs' foretold by the SAVIOUR.

Amidst this enthusiastic and general yearning in Palestine for a heaven-sent Deliverer, Vespasian and his veterans entered the country; and as his first attacks upon the insurgents were successful, it is not to be wondered at that he began to fancy himself the long-expected hero. This fancy ripened into faith when he visited the famous Oracle at



Mount Carmel. The priest after inspecting the entrails of his sacrifice to the deity of the place, told him with mysterious significance, that 'whatever he was purposing, whether to build a house, to buy an estate, or to increase his family of slaves,—the mansion should be ample, the property vast, the slaves a multitude.' Vespasian brooded over these shadowy intimations, and at length believed himself, 'the favourite of fortune;' and the soldiers hearing of them turned their eyes more fixedly and devoutly than ever upon their general. One day the word *Imperator* was first dropped, as it were by accident; it was caught up, passed from rank to rank, and finally ratified by the unusual acclamations of the whole army. Vitellius, sunk in sensuality, had his spell of power broken by the very first cry of defection that rose on the plains of Palestine; his offer to surrender the Empire was scouted by his soldiers. When Sabinus anticipating his brother Vespasian's cautious policy, seized the Capitol, the Vitellians stormed it, burned the temple, and slew Sabinus, with yells of triumph; but Vitellius himself was insultingly slain by some of the opposite party. All opposition to Vespasian's election was now over; he gave up the command to his son Titus, and left for Rome. He was now regarded with such superstitious reverence, that on his entering Alexandria two men, who pretended to be blind and lame, besought him to heal them. He was inclined to laugh at the egregious imposition, but, overpersuaded by his flatterers that he was really invested with miraculous power, and that the knaves were true men, he consented and connived at one of the grossest deceptions recorded in history. Although Vespasian had been chosen by the army, yet, like his predecessors, he received the imperial throne from the Senate. From the first he showed himself worthy of the universal confidence, by his prudent and vigorous govern-

ment. He at once set himself firmly to the reformation of abuses ; excluded unworthy characters from the Senate ; deprived several profligate knights of their rank ; restored the due administration of justice ; suppressed the odious class of spies ; and stopped all trials of high-treason against the person of the Sovereign. The superstitious Romans had for some months looked with horror on the ruins of the Capitoline Temple ; and Vespasian gained great popularity by quickly laying the foundation-stone of a new temple. This was done with all the ancient grand and time-honoured solemnities, and exactly on the former traces ; for the sooth-sayers declared, the gods would have no change made in their old familiar dwelling-place. The area of the temple-precincts was surrounded with a string of fillets and chaplets. Soldiers of auspicious names marched into it bearing boughs of auspicious trees ; and the Vestal Virgins, attended by a troop of boys and girls—both of whose parents were living—sprinkled it profusely with holy water. Preceded by the pontiffs in gorgeous array, the prætor next stalking round sanctified the place with blood of many sacrifices, and placed their entrails upon a grassy altar, invoking Jove, and his assessors Juno and Minerva, with the great ‘ Mother of the Gods,’ Cybele, and all the patron-deities of the Empire, ‘ to prosper and assist in re-building of the temple founded by the piety of men.’ Then he touched with his hands the circle of fillets ; and simultaneously the priests, the senators, the knights, and a number of the most zealous worshippers lent their strength to draw an enormous stone to the spot where the building was to commence, and placed beneath it numbers of pieces of gold and silver money, minted for the occasion, neither stone nor metal being used which had ever been employed for profane uses.

Whilst Vespasian was thus joyously busied in rebuilding

the chief temple of Ancient Romanism, singular to say, his son Titus was sorrowfully beholding the destruction of the Temple of the LORD.

There is not in the whole range of history, a subject which embraces in itself so many circumstances of awful interest as the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus. It was the most obstinate struggle in which Rome was engaged with a foreign power, from the last Punic War to the Gothic invasion. How surprising is this picture of a small and divided nation, without allies, without discipline, almost without military equipments, making head against the whole weight of the Roman world! Requiring, too, for its reduction the employment of the flower of the Roman army, the celebrated 10th legion being actually withdrawn from Spain and Gaul for that service, and its most celebrated generals, Vespasian and Titus, with many of their officers and troops from Britain—‘the ends of the earth!’ Josephus with all the eloquence of truth paints them as defending village after village, and wall after wall with such courage as to require a separate siege for each insignificant hamlet; and with such obstinacy as to make each of their own defeats a source of mourning to their invaders, their strength retreating, as the extremities were cut off, to the heart and centre of their kingdom—Jerusalem—the Golden—the Holy City. At length pent up like wild beasts in a net, within the ramparts of their doomed city; the spectacle there offered of 600,000 souls resisting still their terrible foes, and exerting, at the same moment and with equal rage, their most furious passions against each other, fighting, robbing, starving, disputing, blaspheming, murdering, and calling with fanatical fury on JEHOVAH, by some signal deliverance, to own them as His chosen people—surely this must be ranked amongst the most awful scenes recorded of our nature and only to be accounted for by a judicial infatuation. Our awe

becomes more intense, when we remember that this infatuation, the sufferings and all the portents which Josephus records of that memorable siege, had been exactly foretold, and that with tears, by the SAVIOUR; that He had appealed to the Fall of Jerusalem as to the seal of His own Divine Mission, and the penalty of its miserable inhabitants for their rejection of His salvation. What a startling repetition of His prediction must have been given to that infatuated and furious race when, a few short days before the Roman Eagles appeared in sight, a little band of outcasts, rich in faith but bare of this world's goods, left the doomed city and took refuge at Pella, a town of Decapolis beyond the Jordan! These were believers, most true soldiers of the Lord Jesus, who in obedience to His command (Matt. xxiv. and Luke xxi.) left father and mother, home and country, and all the loved objects of manhood and of childhood, for the glory of God and the love of their Spiritual Redeemer; and set forth proclaiming themselves champions of His Gospel to the world, without a backward look of lingering reminiscence. How awful too was the warning of the self-opening Temple gates, and the solemn sounds resounding from the Holy of Holies, 'Let us depart hence!' And the wild voice of Joshua, 'that fearful man, like Echo pined into a sound,' crying 'Woe to Jerusalem! Woe! Woe!' And all the blazing meteors that turned night into day! Titus, though at the head of 80,000 of the best troops the world ever saw, first tried conciliation; failing, he blockaded the city with enormous ramparts; and suspended all his prisoners on crosses round the city. It was not till the discovery of the mangled limbs of a child, murdered by its own mother for sustenance, horrified the Jews, and that they felt famine in all its misery, that they ceased to continue their successful sallies against the Roman works. Then came on Titus at the head of his

legions; 'protesting,' says Josephus, 'to Almighty God that he was not the cause of this guilt, and had offered the Jews peace and pardon; but that he would bury this horrible crime of eating their own children, in the ruins of their country, and not suffer the sun to shine on such a scene of abomination.' He then led his invincibles to storm the city: they were encountered foot to foot and hand to hand by the Jews; and pellmell havoc raged to the very gates of the Temple, which Titus made immense efforts to save. But the fame of its riches proved its ruin; during his parley, a soldier applied a torch to the door, and in an instant it was enveloped in flames. Titus sighed, and turned away. When the miserable Jews saw the Temple instantly become one vast mass of flame, they raised an awful cry of anguish and despair, and threw down their arms—feeling that their doom was come and the Divine decree accomplished. From that 2nd of September A.D. 70 to this day, they have been ever a standing miracle to the nations, in their fulfilment of prophecy, which dooms them to remain, the

'Tribe of the wandering foot and weary breast.'

Suffice it to say that one million of Jews are calculated to have perished in this war; one hundred thousand were carried off as slaves; and not one stone left on another of the city, save three towers and a rampart wall needful for the protection of a Roman garrison.

The young prince's rash acceptance of the title of Imperator from his exulting soldiers after the capture, and his indiscretion in wearing the imperial diadem at a religious ceremony in Memphis awakened the suspicions of Vespasian; but they at once vanished, when Titus suddenly arrived in Rome, and presented himself unannounced in the palace,

exclaiming, 'Here am I, Father!' The Emperor generously responded, by associating Titus with himself in the government as Cæsar. The triumph which celebrated the conquest of Jerusalem was more magnificent and more hardly earned, perhaps, than any one of the three hundred and twenty which had preceded it. After a long line of captives had passed, the Jewish spoils were borne aloft before Vespasian and Titus, the Emperors, to the Capitol—the precious furniture of the altar of the Holy Place; the golden candlestick with seven branches; the silver trumpets which announced the year of the Jubilee and summoned the Assembly; the table of shew-bread; the two tables of the law; and the ark, or chest, in which the Book of the Law was deposited. The medal struck in honour of the triumph bore the figure of a female sitting in mute anguish beneath a palm-tree; and its inscription was 'Judea Captive.'

Vespasian's arms were equally victorious over the insurgents in the Netherlands, who surrendered at discretion and submitted to pay tribute. His legate, the famous Agricola, the son-in-law of the historian Tacitus, completed the conquest of England, subdued the south of Scotland as far as the Frith of Clyde and the Frith of Forth. He carried his victories even into the Highlands of Scotland, but without permanently subjecting that wild country to Rome.

The era of peace and legal government was introduced by Vespasian, and the system commenced by him remained in force, with but one exception, above a century. He is represented in the series of Imperial busts and medals as short and compact in figure, with a thick neck and broad sensual chin, a round bald head, small restless eyes, coarse nose and lips, a forehead deeply wrinkled with fatigue rather than with thought; and his whole expression is that of uneasiness and effort. So robust was his health that he took no further care

of it than to rub his limbs regularly after bathing, and to interpose one day's fast in the course of every month. He always rose before dawn, read his despatches and presided at his levee. He then slipped his feet into sandals without assistance, huddled on his gown, drove out and returned for his siesta, thence to the bath, and to supper, where his conversation was lively; but his humour was voted somewhat low by the polished wits of the court of Nero and Otho. He ever took a plain soldier's view of his duty, and in the daily work before him he shrank from no responsibility. To prop the tottering fabric of the State, then to secure and adorn it, was his chief care; and as he had succeeded to the inheritance of an exhausted population, a rapacious soldiery and an empty treasury, his difficulties were tremendous. His frugal temper and actual poverty were well supported by such simplicity of manners, that one day he rebuked a perfumed candidate with a gesture of disgust and the sharp remark 'I had rather you smelt of garlic.' His first act was to suspend the dissipation of the revenue in the mad luxury of the Imperial court, and to cause the demolition of the greater part of Nero's golden house. He is accused of great parsimony, of making small gains by speculations, of selling offices to candidates and pardons to criminals; of advancing the most rapacious præfects to the most opulent offices, that they might have more to disgorge when it suited him to condemn them for extortion; and of inventing new, even disgusting objects of taxation, and defending himself according to the well-known anecdote, by remarking that 'the coin smelt not less sweet from them.' Still on emergency he was liberal to all classes of men; to impoverished Senators, to afflicted communities, and generally to the professors of arts and sciences. Vespasian was the first of the Roman Emperors to institute a salaried college of teachers, and his muni-

ficent patronage of literature, by pensions and presents, at Rome, Athens, and other centres of intellectual activity, almost revived the Augustan age of poets, historians, and orators, and generally enlisted literary talent on the side of the government. The consciousness of his own deficiency in the learning of the schools, enhanced his notion of its political importance, and caused his banishment of the stoic and cynic philosophers, whose virulent invectives against him merely excited his contemptuous retort, 'I will not kill a dog that barks at me.' Augustus had endowed the literature of his time with the collection of the Palatine library. When he had decorated the city by the new Forum with which he extended the line of cloistered areas thrown open by Julius and Augustus, and for which the great fire had cleared an ample site, he commemorated 'the Vespasian Peace' by the erection of a new temple of Peace of unusual size and splendour, and embellished it with the spoils of the Jewish War and Oriental works of art. He also furnished it with a fine library, and stately hall, in which he invited the learned of all professions to meet and conduct their tranquil discussions. Vespasian sagaciously observed that amidst all the luxurious brilliancy of the late reigns, the solid education of the upper ranks, in the alarm or reckless profusion of the times, had been grievously neglected; and that the encouragement given by Caius and Nero to trivial accomplishments had reduced the foundation of the Roman character to the level of the frivolous Greeks. Hence his elevation of the able rhetorician Quintilian, to the dignity of the Consul's Seat, for the first time perhaps that it was filled by a teacher, opened the way for such able literary men as Tacitus and the Plinys to take the place of governors and magistrates, and supplant the proud but indo-



lent nobles in their immemorial privileges, and infuse into the national mind healthier sentiments and aspirations, in harmony with their (philosophically) sobered views of material enjoyments.

He had, with admirable prudence, admitted his son Titus, the darling of the army, to a share of the Imperial power, on his return from the East ; and then engaged him actively in all the functions of sovereignty, especially in that most popular one of erecting public buildings for the decoration of the city and the enjoyment of the citizens. From the Augustan age the bath-life of the Romans was continually encouraged by the Emperors, who cheaply purchased popularity by still grander creations for the more general diffusion of this luxury. But they were far outshone in size, in convenience, and in decoration by the baths of Titus on the Esquiline. By a rapid and complete transformation of the palatial buildings of Nero, the baths of Titus were so constructed as to comprise every convenience and every luxury for the residence by day of the great potentate, the mob of Rome. The provision of hot and cold water, of tanks and fountains, was a part only of the luxurious appliances with which they were furnished. Partly under cover, and partly open to the air, they gratuitously offered chambers or terraces for every enjoyment and every recreation. The private lodging of the poor Roman might be a single gloomy chamber, propped against a temple or a palace, in which he slept in careless celibacy ; but while the sun was in the heavens he lounged in the halls of his Castle of Indolence ; or if he wandered from thence to the Circus, the theatre, or the Campus, he returned again from every other pleasure to take his ease in his baths. After all, the mob required the excitement of their gladiatorial spectacles to vary this monotonous life of luxury, and

these Emperors signalized their reign by building a most magnificent amphitheatre within the limits of the vast palace of Nero, and with the spoils of that labyrinth of masonry. The height of this celebrated structure is 160 feet, while the length and breadth of the area are respectively 281 and 176 feet. It rose in four stories on three tiers of arches, divided by columns of the Doric, the Ionic, and the Corinthian orders, which ascended one above the other. Rows of seats arose concentrically to the level of the upper story, the lowest row being assigned to the Senators, the Vestal Virgins, and the Emperor with his suite; and eighty-seven thousand spectators were accommodated within its vast circuit. The building was of rich and warm travertine stone, or encrusted with marble. The most conspicuous parts shone with precious gems and metals. There were eight gates, rendering access easy; and the massy doors of the dens of the wild beasts and cells of criminals faced each other on every side in grim grandeur. A gilded network protected the sitters in the lowest rows from the chance assaults of the wild beasts beneath them; and the forlorn hope of some poor criminal to seek refuge in them was cut off by the precaution of making the topmost bar to turn on a swivel, so as to revolve at a slight touch, and baffle any attempt to climb by it.

The name of Colosseum, now written Coliseum, is referred either to the gigantic size of the building, or to the colossal statue of Nero, on which the head of Titus had been substituted, which stood at the entrance. This magnificent building,—which was justly counted among the wonders of the Roman world, and which is invested in our eyes with a special interest, as the scene of so many Christian martyrdoms,—was constructed with such enormous blocks of stone, united together with bronze and iron clamps and

rock-like cement, that the Romans believed it indestructible, and proudly proclaimed the prophecy—

‘ While stands the Coliseum, Rome shall stand ;  
When falls the Coliseum, Rome shall fall ;  
And when Rome falls, the world.’

Whilst actively engaged in the erection of this magnificent monument, which divides the admiration of strangers in modern Rome with St. Peter’s itself, Vespasian was seized with his mortal malady. He had completed the tenth year of his reign, and his seventieth year, but he refused to relax his labours ; and when obliged to keep his bed, insisted on the admission of even strangers to his presence. In his last moments, he ordered himself to be raised upright, exclaiming that a Roman Emperor ought to die *standing*—the ruling passion strong in death, his Roman discipline, military and official, displaying itself, armed with strong endurance and unflinching constancy to the last.

The deification of Vespasian was celebrated with unusual splendour by Titus, but exactly according to the established form. His image, as large as life, and moulded in wax, was placed on an elevated ivory bed, with curtains and a coverlet of cloth of gold. The image lay in a languid position, as if sick ; and during seven days the chief imperial physicians gravely attended to feel the patient’s pulse, and finally declared his dissolution. The figure was then conveyed in solemn procession to the Forum Boarium (or Smithfield) to lie in state. Thence, passing by the Ærarium (or Bank), it was carried to the Field of Mars, in the centre of which was erected a huge pile of wood, straw, and other combustibles ; on which, under a rich canopy, and surrounded by banners inscribed with titles of the deceased Emperor, was placed the ivory bed, with its statue. It was an ancient Roman

custom, as well in their funerals as in their triumphs, that the voice of praise should be corrected by that of satire, and that in the midst of the splendid pageants which displayed the glory of the living and of the dead, their imperfections should not be concealed from the eyes of the world. So a comedian came forward to personate Vespasian, and enlivened the funeral ceremonies by some satirical sallies, characteristic of the frugal Emperor, against its expense. 'How much,' he anxiously inquired, 'has my funeral cost?'—'Fourscore thousand pounds.'—'Give me the tenth part of the sum, and throw my body into the Tiber.' Then followed an oration, describing his exploits and his merits; and at its conclusion, the whole assembly rose and uttered a shout of exultation. The funeral pile was then set on fire, at the self-same instant a rope was cut which communicated with the foot of an eagle, and the noble bird, with one wild scream of triumph, soared high into the air, appearing to convey into the clouds the spirit of the Emperor; henceforth to be worshipped as one of the guardian deities of Rome.

Titus now occupied the throne alone; and one of his first acts was to declare his brother Domitian the partner of his Empire, and his successor. Never perhaps since the days of Cain and Abel lived there two brothers more violently contrasted in character. Titus, with all his military skill and daring valour, was actuated with a self-sacrificing and generous spirit seldom seen in the selfish and stern Roman. The conqueror of Jerusalem had learnt, from his intercourse with the ancient people of God, some lessons of self-control and of clemency, as well as sentiments of impulsive enthusiasm, warmed to a fervent glow by his romantic attachment to the lovely Jewish princess Bernice, the sister of the younger Agrippa. Hence the anxiety he manifested, according to Josephus, to spare the people, the city, and, above all, the

Temple of the Jews—so strangely different from the ruthless ferocity of other Roman conquerors. There was something peculiarly hateful to the Romans in the character of the Jews; their poets and historians alike display this antipathy; and when Titus appeared as associate Emperor in the city, with Bernice by his side, their prejudices rose in arms against the scandal, and were only to be appeased by the complete severance of the union. Titus gave way; the lovers reluctantly bade each other farewell, and Bernice returned desolately to her desolate country. After the death of Vespasian, she once more visited Rome, hoping that her lover, now sole Emperor, would exercise his power in her favour; but Titus felt too acutely the impossibility of disarming the prejudices of his countrymen, and the firmness with which he resisted the blandishments of the foreign enchantress raised his popularity to an unprecedented height in Rome.

Titus seems to have been the first of the Emperors who gained the equal favour of the people and of the nobles; for he took from no man, he gave to all profusely, and made a point of never sending a suitor away unsatisfied. ‘No man,’ he said, ‘ought to leave the prince’s presence disappointed.’ Remembering one evening at supper that he had made no present to any one since the morning, ‘My friends,’ he exclaimed, ‘I have lost this day!’ When certain nobles were detected conspiring against him, he not only pardoned, but even treated them with peculiar favour; and when they attended him in the Amphitheatre, he gave them the swords of the gladiators to feel their edges—thus confidently putting his life into their hands. He had vowed, on his elevation to the office of Supreme Pontiff, that the hands of the chief priest of the gods should be free from any stain of blood, and he kept his vow to the last, although his brother Domitian had been repeatedly detected plotting against his life.

The passionate love of his people was declared by the extravagant title which they conferred upon Titus of 'Delight of the human race.' And yet his short reign was clouded by a series of frightful public disasters. A terrible fire, second only in extent to that of Nero, raged unchecked in the city for three days, and the Capitoline temple again fell a prey to the flames. A plague also burst out which for some time swept away ten thousand victims daily. But the worst calamity of all was the volcanic eruption of Vesuvius, which overwhelmed the city of Pompeii under a mighty mass of burning sand and ashes, that consumed all the houses on which they lighted; and engulfed the city of Herculaneum in one vast molten stream of mud and lava. Sixteen years previously an awful earthquake had warned the Campanian cities of their approaching doom; but all the houses were standing, and fuller of inhabitants than ever, engaged in their usual concerns and pleasures, when the final catastrophe overtook them, transforming those smiling cities and beautiful vine and olive-crowned slopes of Vesuvius—such as they appeared to Virgil and Tiberius—to the terrible majesty which now awes the stranger; and breaking the long-swelling outline of the fertile hill by frowning cliffs and jagged pinnacles. A less popular prince might have been accused of himself setting fire to the city; and even the volcanic eruption and the pestilence might have been imputed to the Divine vengeance upon his crimes. But in this case the Romans were willing to ascribe their national sufferings to national sins; and they sought to appease the wrath of the gods by public processions and supplications to their favourite shrines and images, and by the dedication of the Coliseum on a scale of splendour hitherto unrivalled. Amusements and spectacles, as usual, ended their worship of the gods; and the vast edifice overflowed with delighted spectators, and re-echoed to

the roof with their applause, and the mingled cries of deadly wounded men and beasts and birds, during a battle between cranes and dwarfs representing pigmies, the combats of gladiators, and their slaughter of 5,000 wild beasts. The show was crowned with the flooding of the vast arena, and a sea-fight, in which naval evolutions were vividly portrayed. For *one hundred days* these bloody and brutal sports endured, the armed gladiators of the morning combated with wild beasts, or with no less savage beings of their own species, always giving way in the afternoon to the naked wretches 'appointed to death,' who yielded the spectators the fiendish pleasure of beholding the mere havoc of unresisting victims. The sports ended by a general scramble for lottery-tickets, entitling the gainers to valuable prizes, or to rations of bread, pork, beef, measures of wine, &c.; and universal were the praises of the generosity of this most generous of Emperors. He had, indeed, all the means for such measureless bounty; for he inherited a full treasury and a firm throne from his prudent father. Had he lived to exhaust that treasury—and his brief reign was excessively improvident—he might have been driven to exactions and confiscation, which would soon have shaken his throne, and blackened his fair fame. He was spared this infliction by a sudden malady, which carried him away in the second year of his reign, and forty-first of his age.

In the last struggle of his powerful constitution against death, he desired to be conveyed to his Sabine villa to drink of the springs by which his father sought to invigorate his old age. How sad was his exclamation on the road, as opening the curtains of his litter, and looking wistfully at the lovely scene, he cried, 'Death comes to me undeserving!' The Romans attributed his death to poison administered by his brother Domitian, and there is little doubt but that mon-

ster hastened his dissolution by causing him, in a crisis of his mortal fever, to be plunged in a bath of snow.

They remembered, too, with profound emotion, that this, the most beloved of Emperors, was seen to weep on the last day of the gladiatorial games. A Roman to weep! They had then shuddered at those strange tears as ominous of early death, remembering their proverb, 'Whom the gods love die young.' Perhaps the tears of Titus may be traced to a nobler source. Bernice was present at St. Paul's proclamation of the Saviour's infinite mercy in the sacrifice of Himself for the salvation of mankind; and she saw his *own* noble self-sacrifice, which extorted from her brother Agrippa the memorable words, 'Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.' Perhaps she may have retained and imparted to Titus some of the softening impression of the Apostle's self-sacrificing love, when, lifting his fettered hands to heaven, he replied, 'I would to God, that not only thou, but also *all* that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, *except these bonds*.'

If such a conjecture be conceded, the merciful spirit of Titus may well have at length given way to tears at the spectacle of woe presented by a dying gladiator—a spectacle thus pathetically described by a poet, albeit unused to the melting mood :—

'I see before me the gladiator lie :

He leans upon his hand—his manly brow

Consents to death, but conquers agony,

And his drooped head sinks gradually low—

And through his side the last drops, ebbing slow

From the red gash, fall heavy, one by one,

Like the first of a thunder-shower; and now

The arena swims around him—he is gone,

Ere ceased the inhuman shout which hail'd the wretch who won.



He heard it, but he heeded not—his eyes  
 Were with his heart, and that was far away ;  
 He reck'd not of the life he lost, nor prize,  
 But where his rude hut by the Danube lay  
*There* were his young barbarians all at play,  
*There* was their Dacian mother—he, their sire,  
 Butcher'd to make a Roman holiday—  
 All this rush'd with his blood—shall he expire  
 And unaveng'd?—Arise ! ye Goths, and glut your ire !

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(See Gibbon, i. 208, 212, 220 ; iii. 226 ; viii. 280. Schmitz, 595-611.  
 Tacit. Ann. xv. 44. Suet. Vit. *passim*. Merivale, vi. 256-282 ; vii.  
*passim*. Euseb. H. E. iii. 1, 3, 13, 30 ; ii. 14 ; iii. 5. Origen, In Gen.  
 l. iii. Clemens. Alex. Stromat. l. viii. Bunsen, Christianity and Man-  
 kind, i. 32. 44. Abp. Wake, Genuine Epist. S. Clement, 1 Cor. c.  
 v. Gasparin, Trois Sec. Milman, Latin Christianity, i. 83. Moseley,  
 Greek Chorus. Josephus, B. J. iii.-vi. *passim*.)

## CHAPTER IV.

‘Rome’s best champion,  
Successful in the battles that he fights,  
With honour and with fortune is return’d,  
From where he circumscribed with his sword,  
And brought to yoke, the enemies of Rome.’

—SHAKESPEARE.

DOMITIAN—NERVA—TRAJAN.

DOMITIAN, as a matter of course, succeeded to the throne as the partner of his brother; and violent was the contrast between him and his predecessor. Titus, reared in the rough school of a provincial camp, and thus rising to the highest command; a great warrior, and yet guiltless of his country’s blood; sociable and generous and accessible, almost to a fault; and nobly devoting himself to sustain his father’s interests, while he shared his fame. Domitian, growing up uncared for, in ignorance and penury—his mother dying in his childhood, his father absent or engaged—so naturally cruel, that he even persecuted the flies, and made a solitude of his chamber; his temper so solitary and morose, that even when he gave the imperial banquets prescribed by custom, they were joyless and hurried, irksome both to the host and the guests; whilst so meanly jealous of his father’s and brother’s fame, that he sought to snatch away their laurels, by his intrigues against them living, and by detracting from their

fame when dead. This mean jealousy caused his recal of his famous general Agricola from his successful British campaign, which carried the Roman eagles into the stormy wilds of Caledonia; and it also impelled him to rival them, during the two first years of his reign, in diligent attention to business, and in purchasing popularity by raising the pay of the soldiers, and lavishing largesses and shows upon the populace. He even attempted to eclipse their glory in the arts of war as well as of peace, and in his third year placed himself at the head of the army of the Rhine. But this campaign was a mere summer promenade, in which the enemy resorted to their old tactics of retreat before the redoubtable Roman legions, until they might be enfeebled by sickness or famine. Returned to Rome, he claimed a triumph, and assumed the name of Germanicus. The mob applauded whilst he showered on them from his triumphal car heaps of lottery-tickets and largesses; the soldiers, gratified with an addition to their pay, shouted behind him as he entered the city, and shook their formidable weapons; the poets chanted their elaborate compliments; here and there only a whisper, or an anonymous epigram affixed to a statue, hinted that the victory was a lie, the show an imposture, the long train of captives bought or borrowed for the occasion, and that the glittering spoils were the furniture of his own palaces. His notorious cowardice on the Rhine quickly involved him in a war with the Dacians, a formidable German tribe on the left bank of the lower Danube, who, under the command of their brave king Decabulus, crossed the frontiers, and for the first time in the annals of the Empire, successfully invaded the Roman dominions. Domitian himself took the field, but left the real command to his legates, while safe in a distant city he ascribed the victories to himself and the defeats to his generals. The result was, his setting the pernicious precedent of obtaining

peace, not with steel, but gold, in direct defiance of the old Roman usage. So the northern barbarians returned to their wilds, proudly boasting of their victories and of the annual tribute by which the timid Emperor had bribed them to retire. The already half-empty treasury was now drained; all idea of reducing the army was abandoned as impolitic and dangerous; and Domitian betook himself to proscriptions and confiscations for supplying his extravagances. The reign of terror began again in Rome, and the Senate shuddered at the apparition of a new Nero or Caligula; but the people witnessed with indifference the commotion and panic of the great, while they applauded the gladiatorial games and Capitoline shows, and feasted on their share of the spoils of the most illustrious families, whom Domitian's legions of spies and informers daily added to the list of the proscribed. A still deeper gloom thickened around the tyrant, and in dire alarm for his power and his life, he saw an enemy in every man of distinction in the city or the camps, and the career that yet remained to him became one long paroxysm of terrified ferocity.

History reveals to us the strange fact, that the very vilest of mankind are generally the most superstitious. So Domitian, now, though stained with abominable crimes with which I cannot defile my pages, exhibited himself as the most zealous and devout Supreme Pontiff of Ancient Romanism, and a reformer of the morals of his subjects. He began by ordering an inquisition to be held on the character of the Vestal Virgins, which ended in the condemnation of two of the most distinguished to destroy themselves with their own hands. He sat as Grand Inquisitor on the case of a third, the beautiful Cornelia, whose story is so touchingly told by Pliny. She was condemned to be buried alive, with a crust of bread and a cruise of water, and so left, forsooth, to the

mercy of the 'Great Mother of the Gods!' Most stern was this Supreme Pontiff's punishment of every disrespect of the gods. When one of his own favourites used a piece of marble belonging to a temple as a monument over his child, he affected righteous indignation, caused the tomb to be torn up, and the body thrown into the sea. Although only forty-one years had elapsed since Claudius had celebrated the great centenary secular games, Domitian distinguished his pontificate by a repetition of them with surpassing splendour. But in his restoration of Jupiter's temple on the Capitoline, he far outstripped all the rulers of Rome that ever went before or followed him. The gilding of the bronze tiles with which it was covered was his gift; and the estimate, including the gilding of the bases and capitals of the pillars, and of the innumerable statues which crowded the temple, exceeded £2,500,000! The gilded roof of the Capitoline temple continued for many centuries to be a conspicuous ornament of Rome, and contributed to give her the name of the 'Golden City,' which she retained late into the middle ages.

The canonization of Domitian's father and brother, made it easy to enrol himself amongst the gods, especially as no other Emperor had succeeded to an actual father and brother; so this abominable tyrant, even while yet alive, was permitted to challenge divine honours, by the vague superstitious feelings of the people, and to throng the city with images of himself. Of all these effigies, the most magnificent was his equestrian colossal statue in gilt bronze, erected in the centre of the Forum. Planted on a lofty pedestal, from which his head seemed to pierce the sky, and shining down upon the glowing roofs of halls and temples, he sat with his right hand advanced in the attitude of command, and bearing in his left a figure of Minerva, his sword reposing peacefully in

his scabbard, while his prancing war-horse trampled on the forehead of a figure representing the conquered Rhine. And so he allowed victims to be slaughtered before his statues, and the mob of the theatre hailed him and the Empress—even when he took her back after the divorce which so scandalized most corrupt Rome—as our Lord and our Lady. He even suffered himself, as a pope did in after times, to be styled ‘Our Lord God!’ And he caused an unfortunate citizen who complained of his unjust partiality in the Coliseum, to be seized and thrown to the wild beasts, for blasphemy against God! As the Supreme Pontiff of Rome, he affected great indignation against the Jews and Christians for their efforts to convert Romans to their own faith. On this charge he put to death his own first cousin, Flavius Clemens, the pupil of Quintillian, and destined heir of the throne; and banished his niece Domitilla to the desolate island of Pandataria—now called Santa Maria—on the Neapolitan coast.

The most interesting case in this persecution is that recorded of the final result of the inquiries instituted by Vespasian, and continued by his son, into all claims on the succession from the royal house of David. So strong still was the general expectation of the appearance of a prince, born in Judea, destined to the empire of the world. The grandsons of the Apostle Jude, ‘the brother of our Lord,’ were at length discovered as the sole surviving claimants to the throne of David. They were summoned before Domitian, who asked whether they were descended from David? When they confessed it, he anxiously inquired, ‘What were their means?’ They declared that they possessed little more than 9,000 Roman pence (about £300), with twenty-four acres of land; and showed him their hands, hard with daily toil, in token of the simple industry by which they gained their living. Once more the Emperor asked the nature of CHRIST’s kingdom,

and when they replied that it was 'not of this world, but should appear at the consummation of all things,' he was satisfied, and put a stop to the persecution of Christians.

That most fatal of all weapons against liberty, the spy-system, had been exercised more or less by all the tyrants of Rome; but Domitian carried it furthest, and used it the most ingeniously, suborning the common soldiers; seducing into this infamous service men of high rank; and corrupting the Senate by turning it into a mob of rivals, whose calumnies against each other made the bravest knights and haughtiest nobles quail in silence. Under this base spy-system every act, every word, every sigh was noted against them, and disgrace, exile, and death followed upon secret whispers. Often was the citizen sitting in the theatre entrapped by a disguised soldier beside him, who pretended to murmur against the Emperor, till he led his unsuspecting neighbour to confide to him his own complaints, and then skulked away to denounce him at the secret tribunal, where Domitian sat in judgment upon all such accusations, and amusing himself with the terrors of the wretches whom he was about to sacrifice. Some ghastly stories were circulated, which show his grim satisfaction in playing on their fears. Eleven members of the imperial council, the especial objects of his hate, and pale, as all might see, from anxiety for their doom, once hurried in the darkness along the Appian Way, and met at midnight in the vestibule of his Alban villa, fourteen miles from Rome, of which the traces yet exist on the slopes of the hill covered by the modern Albano. While yet waiting for admission, and fearfully asking each other in whispers the cause of their sudden summons, the menials of the palace passed by bearing aloft a huge turbot, a present to the Emperor, which they had the mortification of seeing introduced to his presence, while the doors continued shut against

themselves. A fisherman had found the monster stranded on the beach at Ancona; and when at last the privy councillors were admitted to his presence, the question for their deliberation was—whether the big fish should be cut in pieces, or served up whole on some enormous dish constructed in its honour? Another time, after having entertained the citizens at a great feast, he invited a select company of the highest nobles to a banquet. What was their consternation when they were admitted at midnight into a gloomy hall all hung with funeral sables, the walls black, the ceiling black, the pavement black, and the seats, bare and low, of black marble also! Then each guest was solemnly led by a black mute to his own seat, at the head of which a column was placed, like a tomb-stone, on which his name was inscribed with the cresset-lamp above it, such as was suspended in the tombs! Presently there entered a troop of naked boys, blackened, who danced around them the horrid death-dance (with doleful funeral dirge), and then stood still, offering each the fragments of food which were commonly offered to the dead. The guests were paralyzed with terror, every moment expecting death; the more so, as a death-like silence was kept, as though all the others were dead themselves, except when Domitian, in lugubrious accents, now and then let fall a sentence pertaining to the state of the dead! When the Emperor had sufficiently enjoyed his cruel jest, and had sent his visitors home half-dead with fear, and expecting worse to follow; he bade each be presented with the cup and platter on which his dismal supper had been served, and with the slave, now neatly washed and apparelled, who had waited upon him.

The last and foulest act of this demon-prince was the poisoning of that gallant and popular general Agricola. But the hour of retribution at last struck. A child, it is said,



whom he suffered to attend in his private chamber, suspecting no harm from such a companion, one day found the tablets which he placed under his pillow, and brought them to the Empress. She, horrified at discovering her own name and those of her familiar servants on the death-list, joined in a plot for his assassination by Stephanus, the indignant freedman of Clemens, his murdered cousin. So the blood-stained tyrant ingloriously fell in the recesses of his palace, by the hands of his own attendants.

COCCEIUS NERVA, one well versed in affairs, an accomplished writer and speaker, and popular for his amiable character, was instantly elected by the Senate to fill the vacant throne. Perhaps they could scarcely have made a safer choice, for Nerva's age and infirmities would dispose him to calm, by mild measures, the panic with which Domitian's reign of terror was convulsing the Empire; whilst his agreeable and imposing aspect was likely to win and retain the admiration of the populace; the Senators might hope to guide him, and the soldiers could hardly fear him.

The moment was an important turning-point in the career of the Empire, which now enters on a new phase of its history. Henceforth political claims rather than those of hereditary descent guided the Romans in their choice of an Emperor; and as Nerva soon strengthened his position by adopting and proclaiming as his successor Ulpian Trajan, the valiant and able general of the army on the Rhine; the actual Sovereign ever after could secure the throne for any brave and faithful commander, however mean might be his birth, and void he might be of political power. Nerva's first acts were highly popular, for they were the reversal of all sentences against Domitian's victims, the prosecution of all his spies, and the recall of all exiles. He restored, as far as possible, to their proper owners all unjustly confiscated estates

and houses, and divided portions of land amongst poor and industrious citizens in the spirit of the republican legislation ; and he was the first to devise a scheme, which received ample development in later times, for relieving the poor by a provision for their orphan children. The better-minded citizens were not displeased at his retrenching the enormous expenditure in games and spectacles, and forbidding so much blood to be shed in the Amphitheatre, while he gratified the populace by allowing the favourite pantomime, and its clowns and buffoons again to amuse them. But the crowning trait of his government was his selling off great masses of the imperial property, jewels, and furniture, to defray these expenses ; and supply largesses to the mob and soldiers, and presents to the Senators. He had voluntarily vowed not to cause the death of a Senator, and, perhaps, like Titus before him, he owed it to the briefness of his reign that he was enabled to keep his vow. His name has ever been associated in the annals of Rome with the mildness of age and the charm of paternal government, for his constitution, broken by the peculiarly Roman vices of drunkenness and debauchery, sunk before he was forced to take one single harsh measure. He died in the sixteenth month of his reign ; and the Senate at once proceeded to the rite of deifying their favorite Emperor, and erecting images and shrines for his worship.

Trajan, though of Italian parentage, was a Spaniard by birth, and the first of the foreign Emperors. From his boyhood a soldier, as his father had been, he received in his tent the legates sent by the Senate to invest him with the Imperial purple ; accepted it with military brevity, and voluntarily pledged himself, that his hands should also be stainless of a Senator's blood. So skilfully was the State machine worked in Rome, that its wheels moved on in perfect order, although

Trajan postponed his reappearance there for nearly a year, till he had completed his campaign on the Rhine and the Danube. His entrance into Rome was long remembered as that of a hero who, strong in the simple grandeur of his exploits and of his genius, disdained the ostentation with which mean minds endeavour to dazzle and captivate the vulgar. He came simply on foot, unattended by guards, allowing all classes of citizens to throng around him, distinguished from them only by his lofty figure and dignified bearing; admitting the greetings of the Senators as familiarly as he had accepted them when a fellow-subject; addressing the knights by name; and entering the palace of the Cæsars as if the owner of a private mansion. His wife Plotina won all hearts by turning with beautiful modesty towards the multitude, on the highest step of the palace entrance, and declaring that she was about to enter it with the same magnanimity with which she would wish, if needful, to abandon it hereafter. Such was his confidence in the love of the army that he ventured to reduce the customary largess to one-half its usual amount; and not a murmur was heard even in the camp of the Prætorians. His bold words to the city præfect, as he handed to him the poniard which was the symbol of his office, 'Use this for me, if I do well; if ill against me,' were remembered to his honour even in the last decline of Rome. His first care was to cleanse the city of spies and informers far more effectively than Titus and Nerva had done; and when the most guilty had been selected for capital punishment, the rest were shipped for exile, beyond sea, on the craziest barks in the stormiest weather.

Trajan's noble saying, reminding us forcibly of our SAVIOUR's golden rule, 'that he would wish himself to act as Emperor towards each of his subjects, as he would wish that subject to act towards himself as Sovereign,' obtained him

such favour at Rome, that the Senate decreed to him, in addition to all the other titles borne by the Emperors, that of *Optimus*, or the Best. He was the first Emperor who made an effort for public education in Rome, by establishing a fund for the instruction of poor but free-born children. But he soon returned to the stir and movement of his military life, and quitted the city to undertake war on a large scale against the barbarous tribes which rebelled against Rome, along the banks of the Danube and the Rhine, for, immediately after his accession, Decabulus had demanded the tribute with which Domitian had purchased peace ; and, on his indignant refusal, had invaded the Roman territories with a swarm of savage allies. This warlike prince, after a desperate struggle, defeated the Dacians, pursued them into the heart of their wild country, and seized their capital. Decabulus killed himself in despair, and Dacia, at length added to the long list of Roman provinces, was occupied by several military colonies, and standing camps. On his return to Rome, the Senate decreed him a triumph, which lasted for the unprecedented period of one hundred and twenty days, during which 11,000 wild beasts were mangled in the Coliseum, and 10,000 gladiators butchered each other in pairs or in bands !

The records of his campaign have been imperishably preserved on the magnificent column erected at Rome in honour of his triumph. The bridges he constructed in pursuit of the foe, the fortresses he attacked, the camps he pitched, the enemies he routed, are here embossed in regular order. The Romans indicated by their well-known arms and ensigns ; the captives they take ; the sacrifices they offer, are also delineated in bas-relief to the very life. The Moorish horsemen, on the one hand, are designated by light-clad warriors, riding without reins ; the Rhoxolani, on the other, by mounted figures decked in a panoply of mail. Trajan himself stands

forth grandly to the life; he harangues, directs, offers his mantle to bind up the wounds of his soldiers, takes his seat on the tribunal, or stalks under an arch of triumph; whilst a troop of the envoys of Decabulus, bearing the sheep-skin cap which bespeaks their noble rank, prostrate themselves at his feet in homage. This magnificent column rose majestically to the height of 128 feet, sculptured from the base of the shaft to the summit with the story of the Dacian wars, shining on every winding of the spiral band of figures which encircles it throughout, rich in gold and pigment; and its graceful summit crowned with a colossal effigy of the conqueror; for whose ashes a sepulchral chamber was constructed beneath the column. This superb ornament of modern Rome, stands in the Forum which Trajan erected to celebrate his triumph, and which he adorned with two fine libraries, and a vast area of columnar galleries, connecting halls and chambers for public use and recreation. He built here a temple, afterwards dedicated to the worship of himself, and a basilica or court of justice, of magnificent dimensions, adorned with numerous groups of statues in bronze and marble; and flaming all over with gilded images of arms and horses, the spoils of war. Here stood the great equestrian statue of the Emperor Trajan, and the triumphal arch decreed him by the Senate adorned with magnificent sculpture. Thus probably began Trajan's rage for building, for the most part works of public interest and utility, such as bridges and embankments, aqueducts and harbours, conspicuously inscribed with his name in every province of the Empire. It was said that he built the world over with the most solid and best known because most valuable structures, all marked with his name. The greatest of his successors, the illustrious Constantine, used to compare him pleasantly to the *wallflower*, which clings for support to the stones on which it so luxuriantly

flourishes. The triumphal arch to celebrate the capture of Jerusalem by Titus was completed by Trajan in a splendid style of art. One side of the arch even still displays in bold relief the sculptured likenesses of the illustrious trophies taken from the Temple, the Tables of the Law, the Jubilee-trumpets, the golden Seven-branched Candlestick, the Ark, and the Table of Shew-bread, the figures of Jewish captives, and a statue representing the river Jordan as a reclining old man, leaning upon his urn. On the other side Titus is seen in a bas-relief, riding in his triumphal chariot drawn by four horses, conducted by a figure representing Rome, with a helmet and spear, and followed by magistrates and officers bearing branches of laurel. The centre of the arch represents the deification of Titus, and his being borne to heaven by an eagle. These witnesses of the truth of Jewish history are daily examined with intense interest by strangers passing to and fro between the Coliseum and the Forum—except by Jews—who refuse to walk beneath the arch, and creep stealthily by its side, with downcast eyes or averted countenance.

Trajan never resided for any length of time at Rome, the troubles already arising in all the distant provinces of the Empire often calling him away with his iron-clad legions, to crush them ; but he retained to the last his popularity amongst all classes by his happy mixture of affability with dignity. Besides he also enjoyed the distinction, dear in Roman eyes, of a fine figure and a noble countenance. In stature he exceeded the common height, and in public processions in honour of the gods, in which he loved to walk bareheaded in the midst of the Senators, his white hairs gleamed with silver brightness above the crowd. His face was the last of the Imperial series of medals that retained the true Roman type, not in the aquiline nose only which bespeaks the conqueror of

nations, but in the broad and low forehead, the angular chin, the firm compressed lips so sternly set indicating decision and unflinching resolution; while a look of painful thought and sagacity is visible in the corrugated brows and deep-set eyes. The thick and straight-cut hair, smoothed over the brow without a curl or a parting, marks the simplicity of the man's character, in a voluptuous age which delighted in the culture of frizzled locks. He displayed almost as much of statesmanship in the cabinet as of soldiery in the camp. Some of his 'Replies' to the questions of distant governors still exist and exhibit strikingly the practical and large views of the Best Emperor. One of the most valuable is his correspondence with Pliny the Younger, respecting the Christians in Bithynia. Pliny tried to govern that important province as a philosopher, not as a mere soldier, and he resolved to suppress all political enemies with temper and moderation. So he reports to the Emperor that when certain persons were brought before him, charged with the *crime of being Christians*, he simply demanded whether they were really such—the Roman laws, as Neander shows, having made the introduction of any new religion of unknown character, or likely to disturb ancient Romanism or public order, punishable with death or banishment—and on their acknowledging the fact and persisting a second or third time in the confession, he ordered them if Roman citizens to be forwarded to Rome for trial; if not, to be executed on the spot. He consults the Emperor whether this is the proper mode of proceeding, for he admits that it increases the number of the denounced and fans the flame of perverse opposition to the law. He also allows that he can discover no crime, not even the crime of political disaffection, among those Christians. 'Their meetings, though conducted privately and before daylight, were completely innocent, and

their bloodless ceremonial was confined to *singing hymns to Christ as God*, and to binding themselves by a vow, ratified by a simple meal in common, not to rob, nor to cheat, nor to commit adultery, nor to break their faith, nor to deny the trust committed to their charge.' So ancient and genuine a testimony from an able pagan governor, to the godly life of the first believers, has been well regarded as a magnificent monument of our faith; and justly called the 'First Apology for Christianity.'

Deeply interesting also is it to us English Churchmen to recognize our own sublime Communion-Canticles in their 'Morning Hymn,' thus arranged by Bunsen according to the primitive form in which it was sung by minister and people:—

Glory be to God on High,

*And on Earth Peace, Good Will among Men!*

We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we worship Thee,

*We give thanks to Thee for Thy great glory.*

O Lord God, Heavenly King, God the Father Almighty,

*Lord God!*

O Lord the Only begotten Son,

*Jesus Christ!*

That takest away the Sins of the World,

*Have mercy upon us.*

Thou that sittest on the right hand of God the Father,

*Have mercy upon us.*

For Thou only art Holy,

*Thou only art the Lord Jesus Christ,*

To the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Trajan had already passed his law against secret societies, in order to crush factions; but, seeing the harmless character of the new religion, he commanded that Christians should



not be sought for nor encouragement given to informers ; that mild measures should be used towards them, unless when bold and perverse professors of those proscribed opinions should be brought before his tribunal in a legal manner, when the majesty of the Roman law required that they should be firmly and sternly dealt with. So this third persecution, in the year 103, dating from Pliny's arrival in Bithynia, quietly passed away, bequeathing to us this clear testimony to the universal belief of the Christians of the First Century in the Saviour's Divinity from an eminent heathen writer, whose position as a judge gave him every facility of arriving at the truth, and who was perfectly impartial as is evident from his perplexity as to the course to be pursued.

Leaving Trajan to pursue his brilliant but toilsome career, let us refresh ourselves with a review of Roman literature, which has now reached its brazen or Vespasian age. The authors of this period present but little of the enthusiasm for the Imperial government which so generally marks its golden or Augustan age. The monstrous crimes and follies of the bad Emperors had broken the spell which the genius of Cæsar and Augustus had cast over the intellect of the Empire. Their compositions evidently display artistic development as the main object in view, and not the establishment of the Imperial rule. Lucan, Silius and Statius, though greatly inferior to Virgil and Ovid in melody and power, are so thoroughly imbued with 'the art of Poetry,' that they cannot be refused admission within the glorious circle of the master-spirits of 'imagination all compact.' The 'careful felicity' of Horace in his Odes is admirably reproduced in Martial's 'studied ease,' under the form more natural to the age, for the lyrics of the Augustan period are characteristically represented by the Epigrams of the Vespasian ;

whilst his Satires are surpassed in severity and skilful portraiture by Juvenal, whose every line as it speeds along flings its dart of scorn at the vices and the crimes which he has pilloried in the public eye. Persius also not unfrequently is more happy than his master in terse and elaborate style and graphic touches of word-painting, whilst describing and indignantly condemning the Roman disgust at poverty, and eager greediness of gold. If Cicero's sounding periods and spirit-stirring orations no longer awoke 'the Senate and Roman people,' 'the Conscript Fathers and Quirites,' to battle for their republican liberties, there were still to be heard the sweetly modulated accents of the refined rhetorician Quintilian, full of precision of aim, and studied completeness of execution. In history a great rival to Livy now arose in Tacitus, and in place of a romancer whose grand fancy portraits decorate the long galleries of Roman history through which he roams, we have a philosopher, who has his own theories of society and politics, who has seen much public life in high official station, and who paints the world of real life, never attempting to move the passions by diffuse description, but often by some delicate touch of pathos making the heart to warm and the eyes to overflow. Plutarch and Suetonius too, as biographers of the Emperors and of their times, are not only pre-eminent in their literary path, but furnish us with facts which prove the important historical truth, that both the cruelty and the licentiousness of Roman society date from some hundred years before the establishment of the Empire; that they were the natural product of our corrupt humanity, and were the seeds rather than the fruit of the Imperial despotism.

It should also be well remembered that the Roman history began in legends of deceased nobles, adapted to de-

clamatory recitation by the flatterers of their living friends, and that, though the Romans were the most grammatical speakers and writers in the world, their national vanity or prejudice still so thoroughly perverted their power of stating facts, that not one of their latest historians is to be fully believed. At Rome, falsehoods advanced for the credit of the nation or of popular characters, met with ready indulgence; and the habit of falsification once acquired was oftener still employed in blackening and vilifying the objects of general dislike. Hence Roman criticism lacked the training or means required for the correction of an error in *fact*, though lynx-eyed in detecting the abuse of a figure of *rhetoric* or a phrase of *grammar*. All the great modern historians agree with Niebuhr as to this fatal flaw in Roman criticism; which thus might be the tact of a spectator in the circus, but never could be the acumen of a judge on the tribunal, impartially sifting and weighing evidence, for their prejudices were always wilfully permitted to pervert their judgment. Such steady progress in the same beaten path of historic writing, suited to the aggrandizement of Rome, is not less characteristic of this extraordinary people, than the unchangeable nature of its system of government, when once firmly established. Though the imperial government now rested on a military revolution, its system was still the utmost outward deference for the Senate. In the respect which they showed to this antique image of aristocratic authority, Vespasian, Trajan, and the Antonines were not surpassed by Augustus himself. The real authority, doubtless, remained with the military chief, but the semblance was imparted to his rivals in the Senate, with a grace and a show of liberality which cajoled them into complacent acquiescence. It also is characteristic of this iron race, that of the eight Emperors in succession from Vespasian downwards, one only was a debauchee and a tyrant,

probably because, with that single exception, they had all been trained from youth to habits of discipline and the discharge of public duties ; they had learnt to obey before they were called upon to govern, a training which seldom failed, under the stern traditions of Roman education, to make men of conduct and self-control.

Trajan's most successful expedition in the East was, near the close of his reign, into Armenia. He received the gifts and homage of the princes along his whole course with the air of an Oriental potentate. It must be confessed, that his conduct to the gallant prince Parthamasis was treacherous and cruel ; but the Romans ever considered themselves justified in breaking faith with foreigners, whenever ' the majesty of Rome ' might suffer loss by honourable adhesion to their plighted promises. Flushed with victory, he now determined to crush the Parthians, those ancient and formidable foes of Rome, and made Antioch the head-quarters of his immense army, whilst preparing for the expedition. Soon after his arrival a terrible earthquake, which shook the whole of Syria, nearly laid Antioch in ruins, and but for ready help in extricating him from the ruins of the palace, he himself would have perished. Dreadful was the consternation amongst the citizens and soldiers ; and murmurs rose to outcries, charging the numerous Christians there with having brought this calamity upon them, by their neglect of the gods. The Christian bishop Ignatius presented himself before the Emperor, as the guardian of his flock, and the apologist of Christianity. The conference between them was short, but intensely interesting. ' What impious spirit art thou,' exclaimed Trajan, ' both to transgress our commands, and to ensnare others into the same folly, to their destruction ? ' ' Theophorus ought not to be called so,' was the resolute answer, ' forasmuch as all evil spirits are departed from the

servants of God. But if thou call me impious because I am hostile to evil spirits, I own the charge in that respect, for I dissolve all their snares through the inward support of Christ, the heavenly King.' 'Who is Theophorus?' asked Trajan in amazement. 'He who has Christ in his breast,' was the reply. 'And thinkest thou not, that the gods reside in us also,' asked the Emperor, 'who fight for us against our enemies?' 'Thou mistakest,' was the bishop's dauntless rejoinder, 'in calling the demons of the nations by the name of gods, for there is only one God, who made heaven and earth, the seas and all that in them is; and one Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son, whose kingdom be my portion.' 'His kingdom,' cried Trajan scornfully, 'His kingdom, do you say, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate?' 'His kingdom,' said Ignatius, pointing upwards, 'who crucified my sin with its author, and put all the fraud and malice of Satan under the feet of those who carry Him in their hearts.' 'Dost thou, then,' was the stern soldier's last inquiry, 'carry the Crucified One within thee?' 'I do,' was the bishop's firm reply, 'for it is written, "I will dwell in them, and walk in them."' Trajan immediately pronounced the sentence—'Since Ignatius confesses that he carries within himself the Crucified One, we command that he be carried to Great Rome, there to be thrown to the wild beasts for the sport of the people.' If Trajan fancied that the prospect of so long and painful a journey, ending in such a horrible doom, would have intimidated Ignatius, and caused his followers to give up their religion, he must have been intensely mortified at hearing him exclaim most joyfully, 'I thank Thee, O Lord, that Thou hast vouchsafed to honour me with a perfect love towards thee, binding me thus with iron bands in fellowship with Thy Apostle Paul!'

After a tedious journey, in which he wrote letters to some

Churches, and visited others on his course, always charging them to cleave to the faith of Christ crucified, and to remain united under their bishops; and asking for their prayers to support him in the fight of a good confession, he at length reached Rome. When the Roman Christians desired to use their influence for his deliverance, he firmly refused, saying, 'Let me be food for beasts, through whom I may attain unto God. I am God's wheat, and shall be ground by the teeth of beasts, so that I may be found pure bread of Christ.' He was then hurried by his guards off to the Coliseum, as the festival games were fast drawing to a close, and for the first time beheld the interior of an amphitheatre—a sight forbidden to the eye of a Christian. The venerable bishop looking round beheld all the Roman nobles and Senators in their splendid stalls, with all the ladies of rank and their children, the Vestal Virgins, and a vast waving mass of human faces steadily and curiously regarding him. The day was far spent, hundreds of wild beasts had already perished, and hundreds of gladiators had sunk in the mortal strife, after vainly beseeching the spectators to grant them life, by the little sign of turning down the thumb. And Ignatius, the Christian bishop, sent by their Best Emperor from Antioch to make them sport—why makes he no mute entreaty? Why kneels he on the bloody sand, and looks up to the *Crucified One* so steadfastly? 'Ignatius to the lions!' The words are scarcely spoken ere the stalwart slaves fling open the cage-doors of the fiercest lions, and spring out of reach. Several quick tremendous roars, a groan, and all is over, but a few small fragments remain of the martyr Ignatius. The 80,000 Romans who witnessed that martyrdom, loudly congratulated each other on seeing a most noble spectacle; and separated, henceforth resolving to ask their Emperor, as the finest of all 'sports,' to send a Christian to the lions.

Singularly enough, this brave old martyr-bishop's dying

charges to the Christian Churches of Ephesus and Magnesia, Tralles and Philadelphia, have for ages given as fierce cause for conflict to professors of Christianity, as his aged limbs gave to the Roman lions. The prevailing subject of these letters is watchfulness against false doctrine, and—as necessary to this end—obedient communion with their bishops, priests, and deacons. ‘Be careful,’ he says, ‘to have one Eucharist. For there is one flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ, and one cup for the communion of His blood; one altar as there is one bishop, with the presbytery and deacons, who are my fellow servants.’ In another place he compares the union of the presbytery with the bishop to a harp, in which harmony is produced from many strings. And again, ‘Be ye subject to the bishop, as to Jesus Christ; be subject also to the presbyters, as to the Apostles of Christ.’

Now, so interwoven is the mention of the three orders with the whole texture of the passage, that, as the learned Bishop Pearson—‘the very dust of whose writings,’ as our great critic Bentley said, ‘is gold’—has amply proved, Presbyterians cannot gainsay that Episcopacy flourished as an Apostolical institution in the First Century. Bunsen and Gieseler, on the other hand, triumphantly quote Ignatius as ‘putting for ever to silence, not only the Roman Papacy, but also Puseyism in the Protestant Churches; because the brave martyr always makes the bishop the SAVIOUR’S representative, and the presbyters as the representatives of the Apostles, whereas the Romanizers contend that the bishops are the representatives and successors of the Apostles only.’ Besides, in all these writings of the Apostolic Fathers, there is not one allusion to Peter as head of the Church or bishop of Rome; nor to any superior control enjoyed by the Roman bishop over other Churches. So Ignatius, in his parting charge to Polycarp, the bishop of Smyrna, says not one word of obedience to Peter or the Roman bishop, but exhorts him

to fortitude in his independent position—‘Stand firm and immoveable, as an anvil when it is beaten upon. It is the part of a brave combatant to be wounded, and yet to overcome.’

However, I am sure that all who have carefully, and without prejudice, examined the writings of the Christians who immediately succeeded the Apostles, must come to the conclusion, that valuable as may be their testimony as witnesses of Holy Scripture, and—as *matters of fact*—of the doctrines then received in the Church; yet that their private notions may be too often stigmatized as ‘egregious trifling.’ So Neander observes, ‘What a singular phenomenon is the striking difference between the writings of the Apostles and the Christian “Fathers,” so nearly contemporaneous! The abrupt and astonishing transition proves the special agency of the Holy Spirit in the souls of the Apostles—enabling them to complete the canon of Inspired Scripture. Indeed the writings of the so-called “Fathers” have for the most part unhappily come down to us in a condition very little worthy of our confidence, partly because of *forgeries* palmed upon their venerated names, to give their authority to particular opinions, and partly because their own writings were *interpolated* to crush the free spirit of the Gospel.’

Here is a specimen of the ‘egregious trifling’ indulged in even by Bunsen’s ‘pious and prosaic Roman’ bishop Clement :—‘Let us consider that wonderful type of the resurrection, which is to be seen in Eastern countries—that is to say, in Arabia. There is a certain bird called a phoenix, of which there is never but one at a time, and that lives 500 years. And when the time draws near that it must die, it makes itself a nest of frankincense, myrrh, and other spices, into which, when its time is fulfilled, it enters and dies. But its flesh putrifying breeds a certain worm, which being nourished with the juice of the dead bird, brings forth feathers; and when it is grown to a perfect state, it takes



up the nest in which the bones of its parent lies, and carries it from Arabia to a city of Egypt called Heliopolis. And flying in open day, in the sight of all men, lays it upon the altar of the sun, and so returns from whence it came. The priests then search into the records of the time, and find that it returned precisely at the end of 500 years!' What will my reader think of the Pope who stirred up an Irish chieftain to rebellion against England, by the gift of a feather from the wing of this famous phoenix?

Then the Epistle of Barnabas is full of such puerilities as :—'Moses forbade the Israelites to eat of the eagle, hawk, and crow, that Christians might shun the company of those who get their bread by rapine, and not labour. Also he forbade eating the sow's flesh, because when she is full she knows not her master, but when she is hungry she makes a noise, and being fed is silent again. So lovers of pleasure should not be a Christian's friends, for they forget God till pinched.' Barnabas asks, 'Why did Moses forbid eating of the hyæna?' and gravely answers, 'Because every year it changes its sex!' And, 'Why did he permit to eat of animals that chew the cud and divide the hoof?—Because Christians should *meditate* much (ruminate), and because their hope is *divided* between earth and heaven!' As for the Shepherd of Hermas—that feeble foreshadowing of our noble Pilgrim's Progress—I shall only say, that the hero of it meets an old woman in a gorgeous robe, holding a book in her hand, from which she reads good hints for the correction of his talkative wife and scampish sons, smiting him ever and anon a blow on the breast to imprint her precepts upon his heart. But Niebuhr pitied very much those who were obliged to listen to 'that good but unattractive novel,' so I shall spare my kind readers the infliction.

Neander admits, however, that Episcopacy flourished in those early days; and hazards the conjecture 'that the Apostle John

may have developed that form of Church government, by intrusting, like Paul, certain presbyters as *overseers*, or bishops, of Christian communities in Asia Minor ; and that the Episcopal system promoted unity, order, and tranquillity, though tending to the formation of a sacerdotal caste.'

Then the ardour for martyrdom exhibited by Ignatius must be held to have been quite unscriptural, and to have set an unhappy example to Christians. Our SAVIOUR's command is precise and unequivocal, and such as absolutely to exclude every sort of spontaneous heroism in courting and confronting persecution, for it enjoins prudent measures of self-preservation and submission (Matt. x. 23). St. Peter, in his First Epistle, unfolds this principle and temper of resignation under unmerited persecution with a dignity, calmness, pathos, good sense, and perfect freedom from fanatical excitement, which carries home to our understandings and hearts the conviction of the Divine nature of Christianity. St. Paul, too, stands in the strongest manner possible contrasted with Ignatius, when placed in similar circumstances, his calm, manly, and spirited defence of his life, liberty, and political immunities as a Roman citizen, on every occasion, imparting the highest possible value to his sufferings in the cause of Christianity, as totally free from enthusiasm. Suppose that Ignatius had acquitted himself in the same spirit ; had pleaded with Trajan for his life, on the grounds of common justice and Roman law ; had established his innocence of any crime known to the law ; and had then professed distinctly the reason of his faith in the SAVIOUR ; and calmly declared his determination to die rather than deny Him ;—how precious an example would have been given by such a martyrdom of a truly Apostolic Father ! But the successors of the Apostles are as little infallible in example as in writing.

Trajan was congratulating the Senate on the annexation to the Empire of both the Armenias, a new province of

Assyria, and the conquest of Parthia; and the Romans were again exulting in the good old days of conquest, and boasting that 'Rome once more squared the world,' when the sudden news arrived of a general revolt of the Jews in the East; and of the Emperor's sudden death at Selinus in Cilicia, in the twentieth year of his reign. The coarse license of the tent and the trenches, and carouses amongst his boon companions, had broken down his robust constitution; and the report of reverses suffered by his best generals in the Jewish outbreak clouded his last hours with gloom and bitter sorrow. Through the last mournful stages of his journey, the Empress Plotina had not ceased to intercede for his adoption of Hadrian, his cousin in blood and his niece's husband, a brave officer, in the vigour of his age, of fine personal appearance, and then invested with that all-important charge, the government of Syria. It is said that when Trajan refused to surrender the reins of Empire, that Plotina waited for his decease, removed the body, placed a confidential servant on the couch, drew the curtains close, and summoned witnesses into the chamber of death, who heard a feeble moan, as of their dying master, declaring that he had adopted as his son, and declared as his successor, Publius Ælius Hadrianus, his trusty and well-beloved kinsman.

Trajan's ashes were borne to Rome in a golden urn, and buried with great pomp at the foot of his column. The Senate at once deified their Best Emperor, and Hadrian erected a temple to his worship.

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(See Gibbon, i. 142, 212, 213; ii. 238-245. Merivale, vii. *passim*. Schmitz, *passim*. Plin. l. x. Ep. 87. Wake, Genuine Ep. Apost. Fathers, *passim*. Pearson, Vind. Ig. Bunsen, Ignat. of Antioch. Cureton, Corp. Ignat. Introd. Gieseler, Eccl. His. i. 108. (Davidson's *E. T.*) Milman, *A. C.* ii. 141-151. Neander, i. 261; ii. 438-448).

## CHAPTER V.

'There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,  
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.'

—SHAKESPEARE.

HADRIAN—ANTONINUS PIUS—AURELIUS ANTONINUS—COMMODUS.

HADRIAN is generally classed as the first of the philosophical Emperors; but his genius was many-sided, and entitles him to rank with the foremost soldiers and statesmen of the Empire. His first acts were to secure the favour of the army by a double largess, and to conciliate the Senate by a vow, that no Senator's blood should ever stain his hands. Recurring to the policy of Augustus, he next proceeded to confine the possessions of the Empire within natural and easily defended limits, and abandoned all Trajan's new conquests in the East; alleging that there was no soil beyond the Euphrates in which the Roman institutions could take root, while the expense of maintaining them would be utterly exhausting. Though ample and liberal, Hadrian was by no means extravagant; and even his buildings, however splendid, were far less numerous and various than those of Trajan. On great occasions, the shows and processions with which he favoured the populace were exceedingly magnificent. Once he exhibited combats of gladiators for six days in succession, and gave a birth-day massacre of a thousand wild beasts

but such banquets of blood and treasure were not often repeated. Hadrian piqued himself on his passion for philosophy and taste for the fine arts, and delighted in the society of scholars and in trials of skill with them, though seldom able to control his temper. One day a rhetorician, after yielding a strong position to the Emperor, being asked 'Why he defended himself so feebly?' replied, with a smile, 'It is ill arguing with the master of thirty legions.' But more important engagements soon engrossed his hours; for, partly from policy, which made occasional absence from Rome useful and advisable for avoiding collision with the jealous nobles; and partly, perhaps, from a restless curiosity, he determined to inspect every province of his vast dominions, to examine in person its state and resources, its wants and capabilities, and the sort of government under which it was ruled.

During these progresses, Hadrian was constantly seen at the head of his legions, sometimes on horseback, oftener on foot, marching steadily with them twenty miles a day, and always bareheaded, for if the Roman soldier were permitted to relieve himself on the march of the weight of his helmet, he might not replace it with the effeminate substitute of a cap or a bonnet. Day by day he reviewed his troops, and encouraged them by his own example to submit to the ever-recurring drill which was necessary to keep up their iron discipline, inspected the camps and lines of his garrisons, examined their arms and military engines, their tents, huts, and hospitals, as well as their clothes and rations, tasting himself their black bread, their sour wine and vinegar.

Trajan and Hadrian had now raised the discipline of the Roman army to its highest pitch of excellence: so this is our time to review it. Discipline was its very life; so the recruits and young soldiers were constantly kept in training, both morning and evening, nor was age or knowledge allowed

to excuse the veterans from daily drill. Large sheds were erected in the winter-quarters of the troops, that their useful labours might receive no interruption; and it was carefully observed, that the arms destined to this imitation of war should be of double the weight required in action. Nothing was omitted that could add strength to the body, activity to the limbs, or grace to the motions. The soldiers were diligently instructed to march, to run, to leap, to swim, to carry heavy burdens, to handle every kind of arms, defensive or offensive, either in distant or hand-to-hand conflict; to form every variety of evolutions; and to move to the sound of flutes in the Pyrrhic or war-dance. Josephus, who gives very curious details of their discipline, remarks that effusion of blood was the only circumstance which distinguished a review from a battle. Trajan and Hadrian, like all the best generals, frequently condescended to instruct the raw recruits, to reward the diligent, and sometimes to dispute with them the prize of superior strength or dexterity. It is characteristic of the Roman idea of the imperfection of valour without skill and practice, that in their language the name of an army was borrowed from the word which signified *exercise*, so the Roman soldier knew no intervals of idleness, and was not allowed time to indulge in dissipation. Even off drill he was required to perform long and frequent marches, at four miles an hour, carrying a load of sixty pounds weight; or he was briskly engaged in throwing up all manner of field-works, particularly those needful to fortifying the camp. The military age was seventeen to fifty, and on pressing emergencies every citizen between those ages was obliged to enlist; but otherwise the youths were preferred, as more easily taught the rapid and flexible evolutions which surprisingly distinguished the Roman army. It could adapt itself to every change and variety of circumstances; and no other, perhaps, ever

executed such numerous evolutions in the presence of an enemy; for if its impetuous and formidable attack failed, it then displayed an inexhaustible variety of movements for preserving order, for returning repeatedly to the charge, and, even while in the act of retiring, for extending their line so as to gain the flank of the pursuing enemy, and turn defeat into victory. Originally a legion's strength was 4,500, including 300 cavalry or knights; but under the Emperors it was 6,000, and 700 cavalry. The imperial legion gives us the best idea of its constitution. The heavy-armed infantry, of which it was chiefly composed, was divided into 10 cohorts and 55 companies, under the orders of a correspondent number of *tribunes* or staff-officers, and *centurions* or captains, all commanded by a *legate*, or lieutenant-general. The first cohort, which always claimed the post of honour, and the custody of the golden eagle, was formed of 1,105 picked men; the remaining nine consisted of 555 each. Their arms were admirably adapted to their mode of warfare—an open helmet, with a lofty crest, a breastplate, a coat of mail, iron greaves on their legs, and an ample shield on their left arm, of an oblong and concave figure, framed of a light wood, covered with a bull's hide, strongly guarded with plates of brass. Besides a lighter spear, the soldier grasped in his right hand a formidable javelin, six feet long, terminated by a triangular point of steel eighteen inches long, which, launched by a strong and skilful hand, seldom failed to pierce its object through and through. The Roman always followed up this discharge by rushing on the foe with his sword, a short, well-tempered Spanish blade, that carried a double edge, suited alike for striking or pushing; but he always preferred the latter, as his own body remained less exposed, whilst he inflicted a more dangerous wound upon his enemy. The *sacramentum*, or military oath, was always administered once

every year most solemnly to the soldier, and bound him never to desert his standard, to submit his own will to the commands of his officers, and to sacrifice his life for the Emperor. Their pay was higher than ours ; besides, occasional largesses, and one hundred pounds gratuity, or its value in land, at the end of twenty years' service, alleviated the hardships of the military life. On the other hand, the officers chastised the slightest disobedience with blows, the generals with death ; and it was an inflexible maxim of Roman discipline, that a good soldier should dread his officers far more than the enemy. The *cavalry*, without which the force of the legion would have been imperfect, was divided into ten troops or squadrons ; the first, as the companion of the first cohort, consisted of an hundred and thirty-two men, whilst each of the other nine amounted to only sixty-six. The entire formed a regiment naturally connected with its respective legion, but occasionally separated to act in the line, and to compose a part of the wings of the army. The Roman troopers were recruited from the same places as their respective legions ; but their horses were chiefly bred in Spain and Cappadocia. They despised the complete armour with which the Eastern cavalry encumbered themselves ; their armour consisted of a helmet, an oblong shield, light boots, and a coat of mail ; a javelin and a long broadsword were their principal weapons of offence ; they seem to have borrowed the use of lances and iron maces from the barbarians. Every legion was supported by numerous troops of *auxiliaries*, who were generally raised among the provincials that had not yet gained the privileges of Roman citizenship. Many dependent princes and tribes, dispersed round the frontiers, were permitted to hold their freedom and security by the tenure of military service, in numbers seldom much inferior to the legions themselves. These light troops were commanded and drilled



by the Roman centurions, but permitted to use the slings, bows, and other arms to which they had been accustomed, and in which they excelled. Nor was the legion without its train of *artillery*, which consisted of ten military engines of the largest and fifty-five of a smaller size, discharging stones and darts with irresistible violence. But it was sorrowfully observed, that the use of artillery became more prevalent in proportion as personal valour declined in the Roman army; for when men were no longer found, their place was supplied by machines. Instead of being cooped up in a strong garrison town, which they considered cowardice, a legion was always strongly entrenched on the bank of a great river, or on a dangerous frontier pass, in a camp so carefully constructed by the soldiers themselves, that it presented all the appearance of a great fortified city. Still, whenever the trumpet gave the signal of departure, the camp was almost instantly broken up, and the troops fell into their ranks with perfect order. Besides their arms, they were laden with their kitchen furniture, the instruments of fortification, and the provisions of seventeen days' march; and, under this weight, which would overpower the modern soldier, they were accustomed to advance in regular step, in about six hours, near twenty miles. On the appearance of an enemy, they threw aside their baggage, and by easy and rapid evolutions, converted the column of march into an order of battle. The slingers and archers skirmished in front; the auxiliaries formed the first line, and were sustained by the strength of the legion; the cavalry covered the flanks; and the rear was brought up by the artillery and baggage. The number of the legions varied with peace or war; and they were named after the order in which they were levied, after martial Emperors, or after the provinces they conquered, or in which they served.

The Roman navy might seem inadequate to the grandeur of the Empire ; but it was fully sufficient for every useful purpose of this practical government. The whole extent of the Mediterranean, after the destruction of Carthage and the extirpation of the pirates, was included in their provinces ; and their policy chiefly lay in preserving its dominions, and protecting commerce. One fleet generally lay at Ravenna, another at Misenum ; and to each was attached a body of several thousand marines. Another great fleet, with a large force of marines, was stationed at Frejus, on the coast of Provence ; and the Euxine Sea was watched by forty ships and 3,000 marines. To all these must be added the fleet which preserved communication between Gaul and Britain, and several squadrons of vessels constantly plying on the Rhine and the Danube, to harass the country, or to intercept the passage of the barbarians. Light galleys propelled by two, or at most three ranks of oars, were those used by the Romans in war, as more serviceable than the lofty but unwieldy castles formerly used by themselves and their rivals of Carthage. The whole war establishment of Hadrian, by sea and land, was computed 450,000 men.

Hadrian crossed over into Britain, after traversing Gaul and Germany, and from the account we have of his visit, civilization had made great progress under a settled government. The building of cities, cultivation of land, construction of roads, and erection of villas, had converted the lair of Cæsar's painted savages into an Italian garden. Already the warm and mineral springs had been discovered, which still attract our invalids to Bath and Clifton, to Cheltenham and Matlock ; the tin, copper, and silver ores of Devon were at full work ; the lead of Yorkshire, Derbyshire, and Salop, the iron of Gloucestershire and Sussex ; the coal of Wales, Staffordshire and Durham, were actively raised to supply the

wants of the thriving colonists, and pour their surplus into the Imperial treasury. From time to time our engineering enterprise turns up striking evidences of the skill and energy with which the Romans of these days extracted the natural wealth of the British soil, or introduced their own comforts and luxuries. Most of our great trunk railway-lines and our main arteries of internal intercourse were anticipated by those able practical colonists, though on different principles of engineering; and the substratum on which they 'built' their roads was formed of their well-known mortar, so ingeniously cemented with pounded brick and lime as almost to defy the tools of our workmen. At Colchester and Wroxeter, Bath and Bignor, the remains of numerous villas have come to light, with their tessellated pavements, baths, and theatres. It has also been discovered that, having no chimneys (an invention not earlier than the middle of the fourteenth century), they defended themselves against the rigour of our climate by anticipating our hot-air apparatus in constructing fire-places under the foundation-floors, and thus permitting the smoke to escape by flues into the open air without entering the inhabited apartments. Colchester is celebrated for the vast quantity of Roman remains discovered there, such as Samian ware, rings, hair-pins, and other articles of personal decoration, as well as coins of the Emperors down to the last moment of their sway in Britain, and many of the long flat Roman tiles may be seen imbedded in the walls of its castle.

But the miserable Britons endured all the hardships and enjoyed none of the comforts of this rapid civilization, for the Roman colonial policy was 'to spare the subdued and to crush the proud.' So the submissive provinces were treated with such generosity and justice, as made them faithful allies in the enjoyment of all the rights of citizenship; while those who made any struggles for independence were punished

with inhuman cruelty, by oppressive taxation, slavery, and wholesale massacre. The *oppidum*, or town, of the ancient Britons shows their love for liberty, for it was generally a rude attempt at fortification, being a wide space enclosed within mounds or stockades, or more commonly flanked on two or three sides by woods or morasses, and defended by a rude rampart. Then the vast assortment of funeral urns found about the ancient Roman towns and camps can alone be accounted for by sudden and terrible outbreaks of the infuriated natives against their insolent and rapacious tyrants.

Hence it was that Britain was the great Roman mart of slaves; and English travellers little dream how much toil and tears, despair and death, all the great imperial buildings which decorate Rome cost their own ancestors, in those chained gangs of the host of slaves that reared them. The great William Pitt made noble use of this fact in a speech on the Slave-trade, a speech which surpassed in oratorical splendour all that survives of his eloquence, and which has special interest for us, in the present phase of slavery in America. Here are a few fragments:—‘And these circumstances furnish the alleged proofs that Africa labours under a natural incapacity for civilization; that it is enthusiasm and fanaticism to think that she can ever enjoy the knowledge and the morals of Europe; that Providence has irrevocably doomed her to be only a nursery for slaves for us free and civilized Europeans! Allow of this principle as applied to Africa, and I should be glad to know why it might not also have been applied to ancient and uncivilized Britain? Why might not some Roman senator, pointing to *British barbarians*, have predicted, with equal boldness—“*There is a people that will never rise to civilization—there is a people never destined to be free—a people without the understanding necessary for the attainment of useful arts; depressed by the*

hand of nature below the level of the human species ; and created to form a supply of slaves for the rest of the world." We, Sir, have long emerged from barbarism—we have almost forgotten that we were once barbarians—we are now raised to a situation which exhibits a striking contrast to every circumstance by which a Roman might have characterized us and by which we now characterize Africa.' After a glorious passage displaying the religion, the civilization, and the laws of Britain, he continues, 'From all these blessings we must for ever have been shut out, had there been any truth in those principles which some gentlemen have not hesitated to lay down as applicable to the case of Africa. Had these principles been true, we ourselves had languished to this hour in that miserable state of ignorance, brutality, and degradation in which history proves our ancestors to have been immersed. Had other nations adopted these principles in their conduct towards us ; had other nations applied to Great Britain the reasoning which some of the Senators of this very island now apply to Africa, ages might have passed without our emerging from barbarism ; and we who are enjoying the blessings of British civilization, of British laws, and British liberty, might, at this hour, have been little superior, either in morals, in knowledge, or in refinement, to the rude inhabitants of the coast of Guinea. . . . Some of us may live to see a reverse of that picture, from which we now turn our eyes with shame and regret. We may live to behold the natives of Africa engaged in the calm occupations of industry, in the pursuits of a just and legitimate commerce. We may behold the beams of science and philosophy breaking in upon their land, where at some happy period, in still later times, they may blaze with full lustre—and joining their influence to that of pure religion, may illuminate and invigorate the most distant extremities of that

immense Continent. Then may we hope that even Africa, though last of all the quarters of the globe, shall enjoy at length, in the evening of her days, those blessings which have descended upon us in a much earlier period of the world—mart of slaves though Britain once was.’

Before leaving Britain, Hadrian, in his usual discreet policy, contracted the Roman territory within more easily defensible limits. He also connected the camp of Agricola with a fosse and rampart of earth, and subsidiary entrenchments, so as to strengthen the palisade with a fortified station at every fifth mile, forming a formidable barrier by which the incursions of the wild Caledonians were effectually restrained.

After visiting Spain, and Mauritania, which had never before been honoured by the presence of a Roman Emperor, he traversed the frontiers of Parthia, and from Syria passed through Asia Minor, and made a long sojourn at Athens. Having visited Sicily, and witnessed a sunrise from Mount Etna, the travelled Emperor retraced his route to Rome. Scarcely had his attendants taken breath, when he departed on his second progress, commencing with Carthage, and conferring many benefits on that granary of Rome, the province of Africa. The chief events of this tour occurred at the famous seats of literature and the Fine Arts, Athens and Alexandria. The former city was cleansed, and reconstructed by Hadrian’s taste and munificence in so luxurious a style, that it was almost placed once again on the summit of architectural grandeur. He had found Athens a dirty city, in deep decay, thronged with mouldering temples and neglected mansions, which alternated, along its straggling streets, with low and squalid cabins, scarcely raised above the filth and rottenness accumulated around them, on which every rent and stain of time was rendered painfully con-

spicuous by a sun of unclouded splendour, except when obscured by whirlwinds of dust generated on the bare limestone rocks, uncultivated and barren, treeless, grassless, and waterless. The Athenians were vehement in their gratitude, and conferred on him the title of Archon, by which their first magistrate was still designated.

Hadrian's taste for the Fine Arts found rich enjoyment at Athens. Although the Greeks took their sculpture and architecture from the Egyptians, the manner in which those nations felt and wrought on similar objects is as different as inborn rudeness is from natural grace. The Egyptians, like the Romans, mainly aimed at durability; they worked as if they laughed at time, war, barbarism. They hewed temples, with all their columns and colossal gods, out of hills of solid rock. They laboured on a scale almost as grand as nature herself; but their execution was rude, startling, almost hideous, for they were a clumsy-handed race; quantity was almost everything with them, quality but little. The colossal remains of their sculpture and architecture show us how they felt and acted in their ruling desire to perpetuate their notions of these arts, so as to retain their name as a Nation, and to astonish posterity by some curious art-puzzles. The Greeks, on the other hand, being the most richly gifted of all nations in imagination, taste, and refinement, poured into this grim and shapeless creation of old art their own sense and soul; they inspired it with heroism, majesty, and beauty. The Greeks made nothing with a hope that posterity would find out a meaning for it; the very ornaments of their temples spoke, and their sculpture had a tongue as eloquent and clear as their oratory; for they desired to delight the age in which they lived, and obtain its praise.

They also took up the Fine Arts as they did oratory,

poetry, and painting, and carried them to the highest excellence they have ever reached, mainly because they found and relished the noblest ideas of the sublime and beautiful in their own bright thoughts, and within the limits of their magnificent country. The Romans made the conquest of the world so much the passion of their hearts, that they had little enthusiasm to spare for the Fine Arts. It was because they worshipped the gods of Greece that they were brought to accept the graceful style in which they were executed, and to fill their temples and halls with Greek idols made ready to their hands. The statues of their own great men, triumphal columns and arches, were the chief works of Roman artists, all of them chiefly marked by their ruling desire of durability. Notwithstanding all the efforts of the tasteful Hadrian, in their hands the Fine Arts soon degenerated, and became more vulgar and more absurd in every succeeding imperial reign.

Philosophy had still her own familiar home in Greece ; and could we, by the aid of Mr. Grote's luminous pages, transport ourselves back to the Athenian market-place during the Peloponnesian war, we might understand the reason, for Socrates would rise before us in the intellectual grandeur with which he unfolded her conceptions ; and the self-sacrificing spirit with which he braved scorn, poverty, and death for her sake. We should at once recognise his figure, rendered so familiar to us by Raphael's famous picture of the School of Athens, standing, with uplifted finger and animated gesture, amid the group of handsome youths or aged sophists, eager to hear, to learn, and to refute. We should see the hideous features of that memorable face—the flat nose, the thick lips, the prominent eyes—the mark of a thousand jests from friends and foes. We should laugh at the protuberance of the Falstaff stomach, which no necessary hardships, no vo-



luntary exercise, could bring down. We should perceive the strong-built frame, the full development of health and strength, which never sickened in the winter campaign of Potidea, nor even in the long plague of the blockade of Athens; which could enter alike into the jovial revelry of his wide circle of friends, or sustain the austerities, the scanty clothing, the bare feet, and the coarse fare of his daily life. The strong common sense, the humour, the courage of the Athenian sage, strike us on his very first appearance. Every one knows the story of the physiognomist who detected in his features the traces of that fiery temper, which for the most part he kept under severe control, but which, when it did break loose, was absolutely terrible, overleaping, both in act and language, every barrier of the ordinary decorum of Grecian politeness. All other teachers, both before and afterwards, either took money for their lessons, or at least gave them apart to special pupils in private walks through groves or gardens. But very rarely might Socrates be found under the shade of the plane-tree or the caverned rocks of the Ilissus, enjoying the grassy slope of its banks, and the little pools of sparkling water that collect in the corners of its torrent bed; and the white and purple flowers of its *agnus castus* shrubs. His place was in the public street or market-place, with men of every class, living not for himself, contented in poverty. Amidst the gay life, the eager inquiry after 'some new thing,' the beautiful forms, the brilliant colours of an Athenian multitude and an Athenian street, the repulsive, poverty-stricken appearance of the philosopher seemed strangely out of place, but in fact added to his celebrity. So did his frequent fits of abstraction in the streets, and his momentary outbreaks of ferocious violence, and the sudden irruptions of his scolding wife Xanthippe, to carry off her eccentric husband to his forsaken home. But his voice had a magic

charm, which attracted and awed all around him, in its peculiar sweetness and organ-like solemnity, the moment he opened his lips; even when he uttered any homely joke to some tanner, smith, or drover, plying his trade in the open street, or under a portico. The precept inscribed in the Delphian temple, *Know thyself*, was the text which he loved to enforce, interpreting it to mean—‘Know what sort of man thou art, and what are thy capacities in reference to human use.’ To preach up virtue, and to confute error, were regarded by him as useless, so long as the mind lay wrapt up in its habitual mist, or illusion of wisdom; such mist must be dissipated before any new light could enter. So cross-examination was the mode of his teaching; and with extraordinary skill he assumed the character of a mere learner, particularly ignorant of the very points which he discerned as those most suited to the case of the person requiring his instruction; and, as a learner, always asking the meaning of every scientific term used in the conversation, and watching that it should be taken in no other sense. Then, by a long series of home and effective questions and illustrations, dexterously suited to the case of each, steadily advancing towards a result totally unforeseen by anyone, he finally turned the character of his hearer completely round, and laid it open by a totally different phase, bringing the hearer to take the just measure of his own real knowledge, or real ignorance. Although the moral teaching of Socrates was as miserably low as might be expected from a pagan, for it was the *excess* of vice, and not its indulgence at all that he condemned; yet he branded suicide as an impious desertion of the post in which its perpetrator is placed by the Deity. In answer to a question on the nature of prayer, he also suggested the high thought to his friend, that they must wait until they could be informed by God Himself, or until ONE should come to

discipline them—to remove the darkness from their eyes, and enable them to discern good and evil. Another very striking peculiarity in the teaching of Socrates, was his distinct recognition of our absolute need of the guidance and teaching of the Divine Spirit in our efforts to follow the paths of virtue. He himself believed, that ‘a prophetic or supernatural voice,’ a mysterious monitor, began to address him when he was a child, and continued with him down to the close of his life. He was accustomed not only to obey it implicitly, but to speak of it publicly and familiarly to others, whether friends or enemies. This, perhaps, enabled his enemies to obtain his condemnation to death, in the seventieth year of his age, and twenty-fifth of his teaching, ‘for not worshipping the gods whom the city worships, but introducing new divinities of his own.’ His refusal to use means for saving his life, was also caused by the idea, that this mysterious monitor now called him away. The fame of this extraordinary man was established by the fortitude with which he died. Plato has indeed painted that ghastly scene with such wonderful pathos and power, that we can hear the sage suggesting to his friends the consolation, as natural to him as it seems strange to us, ‘that in the world beyond the grave he hoped to encounter the heroes of the Trojan war, and to pursue with them the business of mutual cross-examination, and debate on ethical progress and perfection; that he believed his removal would be the signal for numerous followers, who would put forth with increased energy that process of interrogatory test and spur to which he had devoted his life, and which was far dearer and more sacred to him than his life.’ We can see, on the entrance of the fatal hemlock, his immovable countenance, his firm hand, his wonted scowl of stern defiance at the executioner, the burst of frantic lamentation from all his friends as he drained the

deadly cup, then the solemn silence which ushered in his death, and was only broken by these words in favour of the popular idolatry, which neutralized all his former philosophic teaching, 'Crito, we owe a cock to Æsculapius—discharge the debt, and by no means forget it.'

Six centuries had now elapsed since the death of Socrates, and although his followers, 'the lovers of wisdom' (philosophers), multiplied amazingly in Greece, Plato was the only profound and Aristotle the only practical. But Aristotle matured a system of study which fettered the gigantic gropings by which the powerful Greek intellect 'sought the LORD, if haply they might feel after Him.' Knowing as we do the wonderful variety which marks creation, and the necessity of experiments for ascertaining the properties of each object, we can see at a glance the absurdity of his reducing all nature to certain rigid classes, and then by a system of sophistical reasoning, called logical syllogism, to attempt to prove, that what is true of the class must be true of every individual comprehended under it! This systematic teaching did not even confine itself to the simple division of *substance* and *accident*—the object itself and its various qualities — but microscopically divided *accident* itself into nine distinct sorts, some essential and some circumstantial, called *categories*. He comprehended every human science and every subject of human thought under these categories, called substance, quality, quantity, relation, action, passion, when, where, posture, and clothing; and by ingenious conjectures, called *hypotheses*, he built up with a mathematical precision, which our modern metaphysical sceptics can never hope to rival, a system of absurd science, and of more absurd theology. Ingenuity and impudence in wrangling were the main supports of this pernicious system; and it flourished, as we shall see, in the world till the illustrious Lord Bacon

discovered it to be but solemn trifling, as nearly every proposition in this retrograde course of reasoning takes for granted the thing to be proved.

How skilfully Goethe pictures in his *Faustus* the nature of this system, in the advice of Mephistopheles to the young student, whom he desired to retain thus as his prey ! Here is Dr. Anster's admirable rendering of the passage :—

' For this I counsel my young friend  
A course of *Logic* to attend ;  
Thus will your mind, well-trained, and high,  
In Spanish boots stalk pompously !  
With solemn look, and crippled pace,  
The beaten road of thought will trace :  
Now here and there, through paths oblique,  
In devious wanderings idly strike ;  
Then in long lessons are you taught,  
That in the processes of thought,  
Which hitherto unmarked had gone,  
Like eating, and like drinking, on,  
One, Two, and Three, the guide must be  
In things which were till now so free.  
But, as the weaver's work is wrought,  
Even so is formed the web of thought ;  
One movement leads a thousand threads,  
Unseen they move, as now above  
The shuttle darts, and now darts under ;  
One beat combines a thousand twines,  
And, with one blow, at once will go  
A thousand binding ties asunder.  
And thus with your *philosopher*  
Who teaches wisely to infer—  
*The first was so—the second so—*  
*Then must the third and fourth be so—*  
*And, if the premises be hollow,*  
*That the conclusion will not follow.'*

Intellectual pride was the natural result of the Grecian

philosophy ; and in the heat of disputation the strangest doubts were raised upon such subjects as the nature of God, the immortality of the soul, &c. A favourite ornament of a philosopher's study was a small marble figure of a sphynx, with a human head between its paws, emblematic of the great riddle Death. One of these figures, as a memento of a philosopher's visit to Britain, is preserved in the Colchester and Essex Hospital, near which it was discovered. There were ten distinct and rival sects of Grecian philosophers ; and how little improvement the system thus received is clear from the fact, that it was popularly said to have become impious under Diagoras, vicious under Epicurus, hypocritical under Zeno, impudent under Diogenes, covetous under Demochares, voluptuous under Metrodorus, fantastical under Crates, scurrilous under Menippus, licentious under Pyrrho, and quarrelsome under Cleanthes. It was about the time of Hadrian's residence at Athens, that the witty Greek satirist Lucian sketched off his celebrated 'Sale of the Philosophers ;' and amusement, astonishment, and indignation, succeed each other, as we gaze on his vivid portraiture of the proud, fantastic tricks, with which they captivated the thoughtless rabble ; the subtle sophistry with which they deluded the great mass of the intelligent students who sought instruction from them ; and the flagrant swindling with which they extorted the supplies of their debauchery from the pockets of the wealthy. Neander also points out, that these philosophers were everywhere the strongest supporters of pagan idolatry ; for they refined Paganism into a more rational creed, by pretending to bring back the popular fables to their original meaning, and to detect the latent truth under the allegoric shell, for the select circle of their scholars ; whilst they unblushingly advocated common paganism as a religion best suited for the masses. He also points out, that there was no

enthusiasm amongst these advocates of paganism, that all was old and withered; and he quotes the fine saying of Augustine, 'Christ appeared to the men of a decrepit, dying world, that, while all around them was fading, they might through Him receive a new and youthful life.'

We can now understand what able and unscrupulous opponents the self-conceited and prejudiced philosophers were to the Gospel; and how emphatically to them the SAVIOUR'S 'cross was foolishness.'

Hadrian's popularity at Athens was shortlived, for constant as was the communication between Greece and Rome, and vast as was the influence of the Greeks over the literature and Fine Arts of the Metropolis, there always existed a strong antipathy between the nations. Lucian, in the person of his Nigrinus, shows us its chief cause in the universal pride of the Romans, which gave them an air of perpetual, incontestable, serene authority that was perfectly intolerable to the refined and sensitive Greeks, who had a lively sense of their own immeasurable intellectual superiority. 'The Romans,' says he, 'dare to speak truth once in their lives—when they make their wills. And what use do they make of this liberty? Why, to command some favourite to be burnt with them, some particular slave to keep watch by the sepulchre, some particular garland to be hung about the urn! And this is the end of a life spent in being carried on soft litters to luxurious baths, slaves strutting before, and crying to the bearers to beware of puddles; and gorging at banquets, and being visited at noon-day by physicians, and all the bustle and tumult of the circus, all the noise about statues to charioteers, and the naming of horses. These are the people whom one must approach in the Persian fashion—kissing their vest, their hand, their bosom, their foot—never, oh never, thank the gods! their lips. These are the lords of

human kind whose fingers are so overburthened with rings, whose hair is so fantastically curled out, who answer one's humble salute by proxy, and who are accustomed, nevertheless, to see beggars become viceroys and viceroys beggars, as at the shifting of a scene !'

Hadrian crossed over from Athens to Alexandria, and there a new scene opened upon him, for the Egyptian capital bore all the character of a noble university, and its philosophy was rendered of more progressive character than the Greek, from the converging streams of new and fresh thought pouring in from Syria, Persia, and India ; whilst Judæism and Christianity conflicted side by side against the gross idolatry of Egypt. Here the temple of Serapis sheltered the remains of the grand Ptolomean library which had escaped from Cæsar's fire, and the large additions constantly received soon made it the great store-house of ancient learning. Alexandria also contained a museum or assemblage of lecture-rooms, private chambers, common halls and libraries in which well-feed professors dined, studied, and disputed together, the envy and admiration of myriads of scholars. Here, as at Athens, Hadrian left abundant tokens of his munificence, in the erection of useful and noble buildings ; in increasing the salaries of the professors and encouraging the youth of the Empire to make literature the serious business of their lives. And yet his own character wanted depth and seriousness, to penetrate or understand the high, profound and settled faith of the Christians. A letter is still extant from his hand, in which he scoffingly places the worshippers of CHRIST, and of Serapis, and the Jews, on the very same footing, and declares that Christians and Jews and Gentiles worship gain, as their common God. However the rescript which he addressed to the governor of Asia afforded the same protection to the Christians against the more formidable danger of



popular animosity, which Trajan had granted against anonymous or private informers. The governor informed him that in some of the Asiatic cities the unsocial absence of the Christians from the public assemblies, the games, and idol feasts either provoked public animosity, or gave an opportunity to their enemies to raise the fearful cry, 'The Christians to the lions!' Then followed the names of the most obnoxious Christians, denounced with sudden and uncontrollable fury, to which a weak or popularity-seeking magistrate often acceded. Hadrian's answer does credit to his justice and humanity, for it was an order that in the prosecution of Christians the forms of the Roman law should be rigidly complied with; that they should be regularly arraigned before the legal tribunal, not condemned on the mere demand of the populace, or in compliance with a lawless outcry. His liberality to public schools also indirectly helped the Christians to raise themselves to the high place which they ere long held among the learned at Alexandria.

The versatile Emperor was drawn here by his curious and busy temper, to penetrate the secrets of magic; and he ostentatiously professed himself an adept in astrology. But he outraged all the superstitions of Egypt by the deification of his much-loved and lamented follower Antinous, who was drowned in the Nile. The rabble of Alexandria was notorious for brutality, and they publicly hooted the Emperor's new god, scoffed at his unmanly weakness in so bitterly bewailing his worthless favourite, and made the name of their own ancient god Serapis ring again through every square, street, and suburb of the city. The master of thirty legions condescended no other notice of the ungrateful rioters than an order for departure from Alexandria, with a taunting allusion to their mode of hatching chickens with dung. 'I wish them no more than that they should feed on their own

chickens ; and how foully they hatch them, I am ashamed to say.'

After visiting the wonders of old Thebes, he encamped in the desert by the famous colossal statue of the old Egyptian King Memnon, and listened with deep awe to the mysterious melody which issued from its lips when first touched by the rays of the rising sun. The free inquiries of modern science has discovered the secret that all the logical acumen of the philosophic Emperor failed to detect. It has thus come to light that the crafty Egyptian priests were acquainted with some of the powers of steam and of machinery, and thus probably constructed a sort of steam organ or railway whistle in the statue, which aided them in maintaining this gainful superstition. His ascent to the cataracts of the Nile was a memorable event in the annals of horticulture, for he brought thence some rare and beautiful exotics, which have ever since been the cherished favourites of the florist. At Antioch his stay was shortened by the levity of the people, and the ribald jests which they publicly uttered on the mode in which he gained the purple, and the woman's trick which aided his ambition ; as well as at his wearing the philosopher's beard upon his chin ; he being the first Roman Emperor that followed that fashion.

Sympathy with the suffering Jews, probably, excited much of this hostile feeling against Hadrian in the Asiatic and African cities, whither the wretched exiles had betaken themselves in crowds for refuge. Hadrian, indeed, had intolerably outraged the feelings of the Jews by his edict forbidding them to practise their rite of circumcision ; by establishing a Roman military colony, named *Ælia Capitolina*, on the site of Jerusalem, and introducing there ancient Romanism in its foulest idolatry. These indignities caused a fierce insurrection of the Jews, led by an impostor who pretended to

be the long-expected Messiah, and assumed the name of Barcochab, 'the Son of a Star.' A furious and sanguinary war raged for several years, till it was crushed by the legate Julius Severus at the head of the best legions, drawn from Britain; and an imperial decree made it a capital crime for a Jew to enter Judea.

In such restless wanderings, always ending at the metropolis, Hadrian was at length overtaken by the infirmities of old age, and took up his final residence at Rome. Here, however, he employed himself with animated activity in promulgating a code of laws; founding a well-endowed university, called the Athenæum; and erecting noble buildings in every quarter. The mausoleum which he erected for himself on the further bank of the Tiber far outshone the tomb of Augustus, which it nearly confronted. Of the vast size and dignity which characterized this work of Egyptian massiveness and Grecian elegance, we may gain some notion from the existing remains, called the Castle S. Angelo. But it requires a strong effort of imagination to transform the scarred, shapeless, and dingy bulk now before us into the graceful pile built of marble, and travertine stone encrusted with marble, which rose column upon column, surmounted by a gilded dome of span almost unrivalled, and terminating in the statue of the deified builder, whose remains reposed below.

Hadrian was subject to a painful disease, and gave way in his last days to such excessive irritation and paroxysms of passion as were awful to look upon, and caused him to put to death some innocent persons. Given over by his physicians, and unable to obtain relief from astrologers and diviners, he made several attempts at suicide. In one of his brief intervals of ease, he summoned the most illustrious Senators to his bed-side, and announced that he had adopted

Titus Arrius Antoninus as his son and successor. Among his last words was his celebrated address to his departing spirit. Here it is, with Mr. Merivale's graceful translation :—

<i>Animula, vagula, blandula,</i>	Soul of mine, pretty one, fitting one,
<i>Hospes, comesque corporis,</i>	Guest and partner of my clay,
<i>Quæ nunc abibis in loca—</i>	Whither wilt thou hie away—
<i>Pallidula, rigida, nudula—</i>	Pallid one, rigid one, naked one—
<i>Nec, ut soles, dabis jocos ?</i>	Never to play again, never to play ?

How beautiful is the contrast between the imperial philosopher's gloomy doubts on the future destiny of his soul, and the sober certainty of coming glory, with which St. Paul cheered his Greek converts at Corinth in the prospect of death ! Natural and exquisitely affecting, indeed, are the Emperor's fears for the 'nakedness' awaiting his hitherto splendidly lodged spirit. Most appropriate and comforting are the poor Apostle's anticipations that, at 'the dissolution of its house of clay,' his redeemed spirit should enter 'a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens ;'—a consummation for which he 'groaned, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with his house which is from heaven.' We now can understand how mercifully the Holy Spirit inspired St. Paul to prove the resurrection of the body for the Corinthians with such clearness ; and to illustrate it with such splendour in the long and magnificent passage with which our Church comforts her mourning children in the presence of the mouldering 'dust and ashes,' of a dear departed one, 'not lost but gone before.'

Hadrian's death occurred in the sixty-third year of his age and twenty-first of his reign ; and the Senate, who had trembled for their lives and fortunes during the paroxysms of ferocity that marked his last illness, were preparing to refuse his beatification, an honour now denied only

to the most hateful tyrants; but when they saw the reverence with which Antoninus removed his ashes to the gorgeous mausoleum already prepared for them, they withdrew all opposition to the deceased Emperor's consecration; dedicated a temple to his worship; and decreed to his successor the title of Pius, by which he is generally known in history.

Antoninus Pius strictly followed the foreign policy of Hadrian, for he made no attempt to increase the extent of his empire, but promptly put down disturbances from within or without, by pacific measures or force of arms. The only serious revolt during his reign occurred in Britain; but it was crushed by the Roman legate Lollius Urbicus at the head of his invincible legions; and a multitude of miserable British slaves were employed in raising a huge rampart of turf, somewhat beyond the line along which Agricola had constructed his wall, to stop the inroads of the fiery Caledonians. Antoninus never appeared at the head of his armies; he refused also to travel in the provinces, that they might not complain, as they often had bitterly done in Hadrian's visits, of being burdened with the expenses of maintaining his court. He was fond of the tranquil pleasures of a country life, and his excursions were limited to his villas on the Neapolitan coast. During his whole reign, his chief care was to adorn Rome; to repress with a firm hand the spies and informers who had reappeared in the capital, and gorged upon the price of blood during the last days of his predecessor; and to promote the progress of education and literature in all parts of the empire, by conferring ample honours and salaries upon the teachers of philosophy. He followed Hadrian's policy also in protecting the Christians by public proclamations, commanding that inquisition should not be made into their opinions. The consent of antiquity gives

him the high praise of being the only Roman Emperor who devoted himself to the task of government with the sincere desire of promoting the happiness of his people.

Antoninus professed and practised the maxim of Scipio, that he had rather save the life of a single citizen, than cause the death of a thousand enemies; and he declared that he considered his subjects as but one family, of which himself was the parent. These claims upon his people's love were enhanced by a noble presence and stately figure becoming his dignity, and his numerous medals represent him as one of the finest in personal appearance of the whole line of the Cæsars. But the historian who honestly seeks for truth, and faithfully tells it, must set forth the disagreeable fact in the rule of this otherwise model-Emperor, that his connivance at the infamous life of his consort 'sowed the wind' of which Rome was soon to 'reap the whirlwind,' in the life of Commodus. The legions, too, by his ill-judged peace policy were kept idly loitering in their camps, till they well-nigh lost their warlike spirit, without which the empire could not be preserved long from the invasion of the fierce barbarian tribes, that ever roamed about its frontiers.

Rome enjoyed the benefit of his paternal rule for twenty-three years, and at the ripe age of seventy-four he was carried off at Lorium by gastric fever. He was heard in his last moments to mutter about 'the welfare of the republic;' and to give the tribune of his guard, as the watchword of the night, 'Equanimity.' He had adopted and given his name to his son-in-law Marcus Aurelius; and, according to the now established order, the vacant throne was filled by another Antoninus, who is known in the annals of Rome by the imposing title of the Philosopher.

Aurelius Antoninus was of feeble constitution, and took more delight in literary pursuits than in war, so he associ-

ated with himself his adopted brother Verus, a brave but debauched general, to whom he gave his daughter in marriage. Storms had long been gathering on the eastern and northern frontiers of the Empire. The former broke out first, and the Parthians surprised and cut to pieces a whole Roman legion at Elegia. During five years this war raged with doubtful success, and was at length ended by the defeat of the Parthians, through the skill and valour of the generals of Verus, whilst he himself was revelling in luxury at Antioch. At the conclusion of the war, Verus returned to Rome, accompanied by a host of actors, to celebrate a triumph which he had no share in obtaining. He brought in his train a terrible plague which was then raging in Asia, and which soon spread its ravages through Rome and Italy. This was the true origin of Roman medical science, for Galen, the prince of Greek physicians, was summoned by the Emperors to the capital, who performed so many cures that he was accused by his envious brethren of magic; and was repeatedly driven by their intrigues from the city. Galen was of a very delicate constitution, but by his temperate and active habits, he arrived at a great age. It was his maxim always to rise from table with some degree of appetite. He wrote in Greek two hundred volumes describing the plants and drugs of the various countries which he visited in quest of medical knowledge, and detailing the results of his conferences with their most able physicians on the symptoms and mode of treatment of all diseases. So earnest was Galen in his quest of medical knowledge, and to test the received opinions by his own experiments, that he made two voyages to Lemnos to examine the Lemnian Earth, then esteemed an admirable medicine; and travelled into Lower Syria, in order to study the real nature of the renowned opobalsamum, or balm of Gilead. It is characteristic of the Romans that while they

excelled in legal skill, from the earliest down to the latest times ; their medical art was almost wholly confined to surgery. The physicians were generally priests of Æsculapius, who professed to cure serious maladies by *incubations*, that is by prayer and watchings at night in the temple of their god, and by sacrificing a cock to his idol ! They kept their few simples in shops, like those of the barbers, to which the sick resorted for the purchase of medicines, and the loungers to hear the news of the day. The bath was their specific for all ordinary maladies.

A dreadful inundation of the Tiber at this time laid most of the city under water and swept away an immense quantity of corn from the granaries and fields. A famine ensued which consumed multitudes, in spite of the best exertions of Aurelius Antoninus. While thus weakened the Empire was suddenly assailed by a most formidable confederacy of the German tribes ; and the two Emperors took the field in person against these dangerous antagonists. Verus died soon after the war began, leaving Aurelius to take the sole command, and obliging him to exchange his philosophic studies for the din of arms. This contest continued with varying success during the rest of the Emperor's reign, and obliged him to keep his headquarters generally on the banks of the Danube. The most remarkable event of the campaign was a victory gained by the Emperor over the fierce tribe of the Quadi ; when his army in want of water, and blocked up by the barbarians, was relieved by a sudden storm of thunder, lightning, and rain, which refreshed the parching thirst of the Romans, and driving in the faces of their foes, filled them with terror and scattered them into headlong flight. There were many Christians in the twelfth legion, and as the storm was said to have been raised in answer to their prayers, it ever after received the name of *the thundering legion*. Having



crushed a revolt in Syria, and visited Egypt and Greece, Aurelius returned to Rome after eight years' absence; and celebrated a triumph, at which he gave every citizen eight gold pieces, and associated his son Commodus with himself in the Empire. Scarcely were the last solemnities over before he was again summoned to the field and his shattered constitution gave way at Vindobona (Vienna), in the nineteenth year of his reign and fifty-ninth of his age, not without suspicion that his son had accelerated his death by poison. With Aurelius Antoninus the glory of imperial Rome was sadly believed to have expired, so sudden and woeful was the disastrous gloom which immediately enshrouded it, after the reign of an Emperor so distinguished for his acquirements in learning, taste, and philosophy; and for outward homage to the national worship. The veneration felt for him by the Romans was so great that it became their fond belief, that he had been some good genius sent from heaven to bless them, who had now returned to his real home. It was even considered impious for any house to be without a picture or statue of the Imperial Philosopher; though his aspect was far less attractive than that of his predecessors. But a foul blot rests on the memory of this last of the philosophic Emperors in consequence of his persecution of Christians; not by a sudden and transient impulse like his predecessors, but by a cold, and callous, and implacable intolerance. 'During the whole course of his reign,' observes Gibbon, 'he despised the Christians as a philosopher, and punished them as a sovereign.' Such fanatacism might be expected from a prince, who entered on his noviciate in the fierce Salian priesthood in his eighth year; who assumed the *pallium*, or cloak worn by philosophers, in his twelfth year; and practised the most rigid austerities prescribed by the Stoic sect, 'for the victory of the soul in its grave conflict with the

flesh and its passions,' such as long fasting and lying on the bare ground, until with difficulty prevailed upon by his mother to use a mattress, and slight coverlet. After his accession his private chapel was thronged with gold statues of his deceased instructors, whose tombs he often crowned with flowers, and for whose shades he there offered sacrifices. He used to lecture in Rome and the provinces, on the Stoic principles of virtue, as the sole good; vice, as the sole evil; and all other things, wealth, honours, &c., as things indifferent. His meditations are still extant, and display his philosophic apathy kindling into hate towards the Christians, whose superiority to all the terrors of death appears at once to have astonished, and wounded his Stoic pride. Ever dwelling on the immortality of the soul, which to the pagans was at best a solemn *question*, he could not comprehend the eager resolution with which a Christian departed from life; and in the bitterness of his jealousy thus sought out unworthy motives for the intrepidity, which he could not emulate. 'How great is that soul which is ready, if it must depart from the body, to be extinguished, to be dispersed, or still to subsist! and this readiness must proceed from the individual judgment, not from mere obstinacy like the Christians, but deliberately, solemnly, and without tragic display.' He could admire the bold and fearless valour with which his soldiers could confront death on the field of battle, for a fading crown; but at the height of his wisdom he could not comprehend the Christian's exultation in the victory over the 'last enemy,' assured to him with his immortal crown, by the great Captain of his Salvation. Christianity was also every year gaining a more public and powerful character. Some philosophers had joined its ranks; its sublimity and beauty having at length attracted their attention, and carried them off from the shadowy illusions that beguiled them. They published

defences of Christianity under the name of *Apologies*, which they circulated through the Schools of the Empire; and even laid at the foot of the throne. Instead of suppliantly imploring toleration, they now boldly arraigned the folly and unholiness of ancient Romanism; and publicly proclaimed the Gospel in the ears of the sovereign of the Roman world, and of the Empire. One of these apologists exclaims, 'We are no Indian Brahmins, or devotees, living naked in the woods, self-banished from civilised life.' Christians were now to be found in the camp, the court, and the commercial market; whilst public attention was rivetted upon them by their gentle treatment of their slaves; and admission of them to an equality in religious privileges, as brethren enjoying equal hopes in another life.

This persecution blazed out in its fiercest fury, after the solemn and costly ceremonies of ancient Romanism had been exhausted in efforts to purify the city, and avert the wrath of the gods, during the awful calamities which succeeded the Eastern war. Indeed the unusual number of victims provoked some satiric Roman to publish the first of all the *pasquinades*, in an address from the white oxen to the Emperor, insinuating that if he returned from Germany victorious, there would be a dearth of oxen. 'The white oxen to the Emperor—If you conquer, we are undone.' Justin, one of the noblest of the apologists, and famous as a scholar, was the first summoned to confirm with his blood the sincerity of his belief in the faith for which he had abandoned the pagan philosophy. Justin was the first philosopher who embraced Christianity, and he gives us an interesting sketch of his conversion in his dialogue with Trypho. He studied philosophy at Alexandria in his youth, under the various sects, without finding any of them able to satisfy his inquiring and anxious spirit. From the Stoics he could learn nothing of the nature

of God; and it confirms Bishop Warburton's view of their virtual Atheism, when we hear, that they told Justin that this knowledge was wholly unnecessary. A Peripatetic teacher was so eager to extort money from him, that Justin turned away in disgust. A Pythagorean next engaged his attention, but dismissed him till he could muster more knowledge of music, astronomy, and geography. A Platonist gave him such little satisfaction by his plausible and pompous logic, that Justin in despair betook himself to solitude. 'As I was walking,' he says, 'one day, near the sea, I was met by a venerable old man of benignant aspect, with whom I entered into conversation. Upon my speaking of my love for private meditation, he hinted at the absurdity of mere speculation abstracted from practice. This gave occasion to me to express my ardent desire of knowing God, and to praise philosophy. The stranger by degrees endeavoured to cure me of my ignorant admiration for Plato and Pythagoras. He pointed out the writings of the Hebrew prophets, as much more ancient than any of the so-called philosophers; and he led me to some views of the nature and evidences of Christianity. He added, "Above all things, pray, that the gates of light may be opened to you; for they are not discernible, nor to be understood by any one, except God and His Christ enable a man to understand." He said many other things to the same effect, directed me to follow his advice; then left me. I saw him no more; but immediately a fire was kindled in my soul, and I had a strong affection for the prophets, and for those men who are the friends of CHRIST. I weighed within myself the arguments of the aged stranger; and in the end I found the Holy Scriptures to be the only sure philosophy.' Justin was summoned before Rusticus, one of the philosophic teachers of the Emperor, then præfect of the city, and commanded 'to offer sacrifice to the

gods.' On his refusal, and open confession of Christianity, the præfect said, 'Hark, thou that hast the reputation of eloquence, and thinkest that thou holdest the truth: if thou shalt be scourged and beheaded, art thou persuaded that thou shalt go up into heaven, and receive a reward?' 'Although I suffer what you threaten,' was the dauntless answer, 'yet I expect to enjoy the portion of all true Christians; as I know that the Divine favour is laid up for all such, and shall be so, while the world endures.' 'Do you conceive, then,' reiterated the amazed philosopher, 'that you will go up into heaven, and receive a reward?' 'I not only conceive, but know and am fully assured of it,' was the firm reply. 'Nothing remains but for us to come immediately to the point. Sacrifice to the gods,' was the præfect's last charge. 'No one in his proper senses falls from piety into impiety,' was Justin's final reply; and speedily the bloody sentence was executed, by which he obtained the glorious title of *Martyr* that has ever since been attached to his name.

The persecution now raged in Asia Minor, and by the imperial edicts the informers were again let loose; and stimulated by the gratification of their rapacity as well as of their revenge, by rewards from the forfeited goods of the Christian victims. Polycarp, the aged bishop of Smyrna, a disciple of St. John, was its most illustrious martyr. He had not ostentatiously exposed himself, but retired into a neighbouring village, from which, on the intelligence of the approach of the officers, he retreated to another, but was betrayed to the Roman officers, and carried to the Amphitheatre. According to custom, he was first treated mildly by the governor; and entreated, in respect for his old age, to disguise his name. He proclaimed aloud that he was Polycarp; the trial proceeded. 'Swear,' the officers said, 'by the genius of Cæsar; retract, and say, Away with the godless!' The

old man gazed in sorrow at the frantic and raging benches of the spectators, rising above each other; and with his eyes uplifted to heaven, said, 'Away with the godless!' The governor urged him further, 'Swear, and I release thee; blaspheme Christ.' 'Eighty and six years have I served CHRIST,' was his noble reply, 'and He has never done me an injury. How can I blaspheme my KING and my SAVIOUR?' The Roman officer threatened to expose him to the wild beasts. 'Tis well for me to be speedily released from this miserable life.' He threatened to burn him alive. 'I fear not the fire that burns for a moment; thou knowest not that which burns for ever and ever.' From the fuel of the baths and other combustibles the vindictive Pagans and Jews collected a hasty yet capacious funeral pile. He was speedily unrobed; he requested not to be nailed to the stake; so he was only bound to it. His prayer was full of faith, hope, and joy, and ended thus—'O true and faithful God, I praise Thee for all Thy mercies; I bless Thee; I glorify Thee, with the eternal and heavenly Jesus Christ, Thy beloved Son, to whom, with Thee and the Holy Spirit, be glory now and for ever!'

The closing days of the last of the philosophic Emperors were signalized by the worst persecution of his whole reign, against the Christians of Lyons and Vienne in Southern Gaul. Among the victims was the aged Bishop Pothinus, now in his ninetieth year, who died in prison from the ill-usage he had received from the populace. When one of the frantic rabble demanded with contumelious cries, 'Who is the God of the Christians?' he calmly replied, 'Wert thou worthy, thou shouldst know.' An edict from the Emperor, instead of allaying the popular frenzy, heightened it to uncontrollable fury, by directing that those only who denied the faith were to be released; those who persisted in it, condemned to death. It is remarkable that the chief honours

of this memorable martyrdom were won by the noble constancy of a female slave named Blandina; whose only reply to all the tortures by which the executioners sought to force a confession from her was, 'I am a Christian, and no wickedness is practised among us.' And yet Aurelius Antoninus is lauded by most historians as 'severe and conscientious towards himself, gentle and merciful towards every one else!' His connivance at the infamous conduct of his wife Faustina, and of his son Commodus, was quite in accordance with the selfish stoicism which boasted of 'wrapping itself up in its virtue;' reckless of the iniquity in which others might indulge.

Commodus was only in his twentieth year when he ascended the throne. If the austere Aurelius was the last effort of pagan philosophy to make a perfect man, according to the highest ideal of human reason, the brutal Commodus might appear to retrograde into the savage periods of society. Suffice it to say of his twelve years' reign, that his time was passed in amusements and occupations that had long been consigned by the general contempt and abhorrence, to the meanest of mankind, to barbarians and slaves, and were as debasing to the civilized man as they were unbecoming to the head of the Empire. The courage which he displayed in confronting the hundred lions which were let loose in the arena of the Coliseum, and fell by his shafts (though in fact his person was carefully guarded against real danger), and the skill with which he clave with an arrow the slender neck of the giraffe, might have commanded the applause of his flatterers; but when he appeared daily as a common gladiator, gloried in the acts, and boasted of receiving the pay of a calling so infamous, well might the corrupt Senators recoil from him with shame. And yet, with the monstrous pride peculiarly Roman, Commodus claimed divine worship

as the appropriate deity of gladiators, the Grecian god Hercules, all of whose attributes he usurped, and placed his own head on its images! It is very characteristic of the Roman genius for government, that even whilst this monster cumbered the throne, and disgraced the purple, as he seldom interfered with affairs of State, the imperial legates successfully maintained peace in all the provinces, and there was little mischief done to the Empire. He was even permitted to put to death nearly all his father's friends, and to butcher the best of the Senators as if they were wild beasts. But his determination to destroy the Consuls, and thus interfere with the State machinery, at length caused his assassination. The Senate ordered his body to be dragged like that of a vile malefactor through the streets, with iron hooks, and cast into the Tiber; but it was, with difficulty, preserved from this indignity, and privately interred in the mausoleum of Hadrian.

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(See Gibbon, i. 146, 216; ii. 256. Merivale, vii. *passim*. Schmitz, 349, 613-632. Camulodunum, *Archæologia*, vol. xxix. Rickman's *Life of Telford*, p. 24. Pitt's *Speeches*, ii. 80. Grote, *History of Greece*, viii. 621, 664. Neander, i. 105. Milman, A.C. ii. 156, 177—seq. Milner's *Church History*, c. 3. Euseb. l. iv. 11-13.)



## CHAPTER VI.

'Turn o'er the leaf and chuse another tale ;  
 For you shall find enough both great and small,  
 Of storial thing that toucheth gentillesse,  
 And eke morality and holiness.'

—CHAUCER.

PERTINAX—JULIANUS—NIGER—SEVERUS—CARACALLA, GETA  
 —MACRINUS—ELAGABULUS—ALEXANDER SEVERUS—MAXI-  
 MINUS—GORDIANS—BALBI—PHILIPPUS ARABS—DECIUS—  
 GALLUS—VALERIANUS—GALLIENUS—CLAUDIUS—AURELIAN  
 —TACITUS—FLORIANUS—CARUS, CARINUS—NUMERIANUS—  
 DIOCLETIAN, MAXIMIAN—CONSTANTIUS, GALERIUS—SEVERUS,  
 MAXIMIN.

THE stately march of the Roman Emperors has too long occupied the stage, and engrossed our whole attention. A new scene of war and military glory opens in the history of the Romans, though with spiritual weapons, and for spiritual aims. We have now to witness a mighty struggle between Paganism and Christianity ; to behold the aggressive attitude and jealous policy by which Ancient Romanism, in its vigorous old age, still retained its power in the face of its young and formidable foe. A rapid sketch of the group of Emperors who swayed the sceptre from Commodus to Constantine is necessary for understanding the various scenes through which we shall have now to pass. Besides, my book might be

pronounced 'unhistorical,' if I presumed to present to my readers the useful and important information which may be collected from their history, without some of the minute details and figures which 'the scavengers of literature'—as an able Roman writer calls mere annalists—so clamorously require, and uselessly accumulate; forgetful that political economy is not history.

The conspirators conducted their measures with such coolness and celerity, that Pertinax, the præfect of the city, and sole surviving friend and minister of Aurelius, an ancient Senator of high character, was conducted to the camp of the Prætorians as the new Emperor, called to the throne by the pretended 'apoplexy' which carried off Commodus, before the news of his murder had gone abroad. The guards were rather surprised than pleased at the suspicious death of a prince whose indulgence and liberality they alone had experienced; but they accepted the largess which he promised, swore allegiance to him, and, with joyful acclamations and laurels in their hands, conducted him to the Senate-house, that the military consent might be ratified by the civil authority.

PERTINAX at once resolutely undertook the melancholy, but pleasing, task of healing the wounds inflicted by the hand of his old master's son. To punish and chase away informers, as the common enemies of their master, of virtue, and of their country, was his first measure. Economy was his next care, for the extravagance of Commodus had lavished all but £8,000 of the £22,000,000 left by Antoninus Pius in the treasury. But when he attempted to restore the ancient discipline in the Prætorian Camp, the soldiers mutinied, murdered him in the eighty-sixth day of his reign; and ran out upon the ramparts, with loud voices proclaiming that the Roman world was to be disposed of to the best bidder by public auction! This infamous offer reached the ears of Didius

Julianus, a wealthy and voluptuous old Senator; who hurried to the foot of the ramparts; and finding the late Emperor's father-in-law Sulpicianus already there, and offering for the purchase a largess of £160 to each soldier, rose at once to £200; at the same time adroitly reminding the Prætorians, that if they elected Sulpicianus he would not fail to revenge the murder of his son-in-law. The gates of the camp were instantly thrown open to the best bidder; he was declared Emperor, received the oath of allegiance, and then escorted by serried ranks in order of battle to the Senate-house, where he was invested with the purple.

DIDIVS, on the throne of the world, found himself without a friend, and even without a follower, for the guards themselves were ashamed of the prince whom their avarice had persuaded them to accept; and the citizens considered his elevation as the last insult to Rome. The legions on the frontiers sternly refused to ratify the ignominious bargain made by the Prætorians. Their immediate revolt was fatal to Didius, and still more fatal to the public peace, for the generals of the three chief armies, Clodius Albinus of Britain, Pescennius Niger of Syria, and Septimius Severus of Illyricum, were more anxious to succeed him than to punish the infamous Didius. The forces of the three rivals were exactly balanced, each being at the head of three legions, with numerous auxiliaries; and they were all soldiers of experience and capacity.

SEVERUS was an African by birth, and full of the fire and craft which then distinguished the sons of that burning clime. The moment he heard of the bribery practised by the new Emperor, he purchased the support of his own soldiers at twice the sum; and marching on foot at their head, scarcely allowing a few moments for sleep or food, he appeared before his rivals could even hear of his claim, at

the gates of Rome. So he was elected when the miserable Didius had been beheaded in a private apartment of the palace, after having purchased, with an immense treasure, a wretched reign of sixty-six days. The sovereignty of Severus extended over eighteen years, and though his craft and courage crushed his antagonists, reduced the insurgent provinces, and left him for the greater part of that period sole master of the Roman world; yet his mournful dying exclamation, 'I have been all things, and all was of little value!' shows the wisdom of our immortal bard's estimate of the cares that wait upon greatness, and that truly,

'Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown.'

His just and able government conferred a profound, prosperous and honourable peace upon the Empire; but his gratitude to the soldiery, or his misguided policy, did infinite mischief to it by relaxing the nerves of discipline. He flattered their vanity with the honour of wearing gold rings, permitted them to live with their families in the idleness of quarters, increased their pay beyond all example, and taught them to expect, and soon to claim rich largesses on every public occasion. As might be expected, their officers asserted the superiority of rank by such profuse and elegant luxury, as called for the general order against it from the Emperor, in which he justly observed, 'The officer who has forfeited the esteem, will never command the obedience of his soldiers.' Still more pernicious was his mode of remodelling the Prætorian guards. Formerly these troops had been recruited in Italy; and as the adjacent districts gradually imbibed the luxury and idleness of Rome, the levies were extended to Macedonia, Spain, Germany, and the north of the Danube. Severus disbanded the old Prætorians, and in

their room selected from all the legions fifty thousand of the best soldiers, draughting them as an honour and reward into the more eligible service of the imperial guards. By this system the youth of Italy were diverted from the exercise of arms; and the capital was terrified by the strange aspect and manners of those barbarian troops, who, at their discharge, returned to their own savage nations, with dangerous reports of the wealth and weakness of 'Great Rome.'

The last days of this warlike Emperor—notwithstanding his advanced age, above threescore, and his gout, which obliged him to be carried in a litter—were spent in attempting the long-desired conquest of North Britain. He penetrated to the extremity of Caledonia without meeting an enemy. But the concealed ambuscades of the fierce natives, who hung unseen on the rear and flanks of his army, the coldness of the climate, and severity of a winter march across the hills and morasses of Scotland, cost the Emperor fifty thousand men; and, notwithstanding their submission to the Roman yoke, the moment their country was free from the invaders, the hardy Scots resumed their independence. Severus, furious at their revolt, summoned all his best legions for another campaign in Caledonia, with the most bloody orders, not to subdue but to extirpate the natives. They were saved by the death of their haughty enemy at Eboracum (York); and his sons, CARACALLA and GETA, whom he had associated with himself in the Empire, and who succeeded to his throne, were too much occupied with their own dissensions, to prosecute the Caledonian campaign. The scenes which followed during the succeeding eleven years, are the most tragic in the annals of the world. We see Caracalla murdering Geta in his mother's arms, and in his fratricidal fury cutting off twenty thousand Romans, because they were

his brother's friends. We see the sanguinary tyrant ordering a frightful massacre in Alexandria, because the rude rabble derided his vain pretensions to be regarded as another Alexander; but we also mark the justice of Providence, which permits so few of the scourges of humanity to escape their own crimes, in his execution, in the sixth year of his reign, by the hand of Macrinus, the Prætorian præfect, who reigns in his stead.

MACRINUS reigns one year, and is supplanted and slain by a boy of seventeen, so beautiful that he won the admiration of the rudest of the soldiery, and so fascinating in his manners that he gained the hearts of all who approached him. He was a Syrian by birth, a priest of the Temple of the Sun at Emesa in Phœnicia; and by the arts of his grandmother, who was aunt of Caracalla, he was chosen Emperor by the legions in a moment of exasperation at the attempts of Macrinus to re-establish the ancient discipline.

ELAGABULUS, such was the name of the long-haired priest of Baal who now ascended the throne of the Cæsars, wasted many months in his luxurious progress from Syria to Italy, and contented himself with forwarding his picture to Rome, and ordering it to be placed over the altar of Victory, in order to convey to his subjects a just idea of the attractions of their new sovereign. He was drawn in his sacerdotal robes of gold and silk—he was the first man that ever wore silk—after the loose, flowing fashion of the Phœnicians; his head was covered with a Persian tiara, or cap, his collars and bracelets were adorned with gems of inestimable value. His eyebrows were tinged with black, and his cheeks painted with an artificial red and white. The Senators shook their heads at the sight, and their gloomy looks confessed more plainly than words, that after having long suffered under the

stern tyranny of their own countrymen, Rome was at length dishonoured beneath the effeminate luxury of Oriental despotism.

The triumph of the idol of Emesa over all the gods of the nations was the great object of the new Emperor's zeal and vanity. The black conical stone which was pretended to have fallen from heaven from the sun at Emesa, and which bore the expressive Syriac name *Ela-Gabal* or plastic god, was reverently brought to Rome by its youthful supreme pontiff. In its solemn procession through the streets, the way was strewed with gold-dust; the idol, set in precious gems, was placed on a chariot drawn by six milk-white horses richly caparisoned. The Emperor held the reins, and supported by his ministers, moved slowly backwards, that he might pay all due honour to his idol, until the procession reached the magnificent temple raised for its reception on the Palatine Mount. Solemn were the sacrifices offered to the new god; the richest wines, the most costly victims, were consumed on his altar; the rarest aromatics rose in clouds of intoxicating incense around; whilst a chorus of Syrian damsels encircled it with their voluptuous dances to the sound of barbarian music; and the gravest personages of the State and army, clothed in long Phœnician tunics, officiated in the meanest functions, with affected zeal and secret indignation. To this temple the imperial fanatic attempted to remove the most venerated of the images of Ancient Romanism. He even broke into the sanctuary of Vesta, and carried away a statue, which he supposed to be the famous Palladium; but the Vestal Virgins boasted that, by a *pious fraud*, they had imposed a counterfeit image upon the profane intruder. Elagabalus still more cruelly outraged the pride of the Senate, by creating his old grandmother a Senator, with rank next after the consuls; and by establishing a rival

Senate, composed of ladies and presided over by his mother, for the regulation of female fashions and etiquette! His monstrous profligacy and extravagance they could have borne; but this indignity to the shade of the departed greatness of the Republic exasperated the Senate to the utmost. The general discontent vented itself in a marked preference for Alexander, his cousin, and in every respect his opposite. The imbecile Elagabalus became fiercely jealous of the young prince; made several attempts on his life; and was himself murdered in a mutiny of the Prætorians, who dragged his mutilated corpse through the city, cast it into the Tiber; and raised Alexander to the throne, under the title of Severus, which he derived from his connection with the Emperor of that name, and earned by the simplicity of his own life and manners.

ALEXANDER SEVERUS was only seventeen years of age; and his mother Julia Mamæa assumed the office of Regent of the Empire. In the hereditary monarchies of modern times, a woman is often acknowledged the Sovereign of a great kingdom, in which she would be deemed incapable of exercising the smallest employment, civil or military. How excellently a Christian Queen may sway the sceptre of the greatest Empire of the world—through His aid ‘by whom kings reign’—is manifest in our own grateful love and devoted loyalty to the Royal Lady who now rules these realms. But as the Roman Emperors were at once the supreme generals, judges, and pontiffs of the State, their wives and mothers, although distinguished by the title of Augusta, were never associated to their personal honours. A female ruler would have appeared an inexpiable prodigy in the eyes of the Romans, who married without love, or loved without delicacy and respect. Livia and Agrippina, it is true, exercised much influence over the Imperial Court, but it was un-



acknowledged and secret ; so rooted were the prejudices of the self-styled 'Lords of the human kind' to the fancied insult thus given to the dignity of Rome. However, the administration of their first female Sovereign rather abated these prejudices, for it was understood to be undertaken solely for the benefit of her son and of the Empire. Her first measure was the very prudent one of enacting a solemn law, excluding women for ever from the Senate, and devoting to the infernal gods the head of the wretch by whom this sanction should be violated. Her next was, with the approbation of the Senate, to select sixteen of the wisest and best Senators, as a perpetual privy council, presided over by the celebrated Ulpian, whose profound knowledge of the immense civil code of Roman Law was as distinguished as his conscientious respect for its dictates. By the aid of these wise counsellors, Mamæa soon restored order and authority to the government ; swept away all the spies and informers that infested Rome ; and filled all the public offices with men of ability and integrity. Her chief care was to form the character of her son ; to surround him with men of learning ; and train him up in the steady habits of business which must necessarily occupy the greatest part of the time of the master of the Roman world. She thus obtained an absolute and lasting empire over the mind of her son ; and never had a rival in his affections. We may well admire the maternal influence which the proud Romans were content to tolerate, when we hear, that to the last the court of Alexander Severus was remarkable for its morality ; that his palace gates were open to all his subjects ; that the voice of a crier was daily heard before them, exclaiming, 'Let none enter those holy walls, unless he is conscious of a pure and innocent mind.'

The practical Romans were too thoroughly skilled in the

art of government to neglect that most important branch of its executive, Finance. The public revenue under the Empire chiefly consisted of the tribute exacted from the provinces; and from the customs and excise raised in Rome itself. The tribute received from the provinces could seldom amount to less than twenty millions of our money. It was farmed out to the highest bidders, who paid or gave security for the stipulated sums, and then sent their *publicani*, or agents, to collect the amount, with the assistance of the military forces stationed in the provinces. How ingenious those agents were in discovering, and rigidly extorting the 'utmost farthing,' is clear from the petition once presented to Augustus from the inhabitants of Gyarus, humbly praying that they might be relieved from one-third of their excessive taxation. Their whole tax amounted to no more than five pounds, and Gyarus was a little island, or rather rock, in the Ægean Sea, destitute of fresh water and every necessary of life, and inhabited only by a few wretched fishermen; but the Roman Eagles scorned not to sweep away the miserable pittance on which they contrived to exist. The customs varied from the eighth to the fortieth part of the value of every kind of merchandize, which through a thousand channels flowed to the great centre of opulence and luxury; and in whatsoever manner the law was expressed, it was the Roman purchaser and not the provincial merchant that paid the tax. Hence the amount thus realized, though variable, was generally far greater than that derived from the tribute. The excise was moderate, for it seldom exceeded one per cent; but it was general, and comprehended every object sold in the markets or by public auction. Its produce was so great, as mainly to support the army. The Senate originally had as much control over the revenue of the State as our House of Commons; but the Emperors continually inter-

posed, sometimes in levying fresh taxes, or economizing the public funds, much oftener in lavishing them away. To Alexander Severus and his ministers belongs the praise of reforming the expenditure of the public revenue so admirably, that he was able to reduce the tributes from the provinces to a thirtieth part of the sum exacted at the time of his accession.

Reform in the army remained his greater, more necessary, and more difficult enterprise; and to it he devoted the best efforts of the last seven years of his reign. He often inspected the legions in their remote camps, and by every means laboured to inspire them with a sense of duty, and to restore at least a faint image of that iron discipline, to which the Romans owed their empire over so many other nations, as warlike and more powerful than themselves. He engaged them in repeated marches, shared whatever fatigues he was obliged to impose, visited in person the sick and wounded, preserved an exact register of their services, and of his own gratitude, and expressed on every occasion the highest consideration for a body of men, whose welfare he declared to be so closely connected with that of the State. When he began to despair of correcting the luxury of his soldiers, he attempted at least to direct it to objects of martial pomp and ornament; fine horses, splendid armour, and shields enriched with gold and silver. He even tried to conciliate the troops, by relaxing the severe obligation of carrying seventeen days' provisions on their shoulders, and by forming ample magazines along the public roads, and causing a numerous train of mules and camels to wait on them, as soon as they entered an enemy's country. By the most rigid economy in every other branch of the administration, he also realized a large special fund of gold and silver, for the extraordinary rewards of his troops. But the Roman soldiers

were not to be so easily cured of their inveterate mutinous spirit. For ages they had been courted by the Emperors, as the bestowers of power. They had often raised their Sovereigns to the throne, and they had hurled them from it again, at their own fierce will. Alexander's struggle against the turbulence of his troops was energetic and incessant, but he was unwilling to use sufficient severity, and his lenity confirmed their insolence. The Prætorians rose in revolt against their præfect, the wise Ulpian, whom they suspected of instigating the Emperor to these military reforms. A fierce civil war raged during three days in Rome, which ended by their massacre of Ulpian at the feet of his master, who vainly strove to cover him with the purple, and obtain his pardon from his savage assailants. Fresh mutinies perpetually broke out in the provincial camps; the Emperor's officers were murdered, and his authority insulted. Whilst Alexander lay at Antioch a remarkable event occurred, which illustrates the dissolute manners of the troops, and the energy with which this excellent Emperor endeavoured to correct them. The punishment of some soldiers guilty of scandalous disorder having caused a sedition in the legion to which they belonged, Alexander ascended the tribunal, and urged his duty and determination to maintain the discipline, which could not be relaxed without the ruin of the Roman name and army. Their clamours rose fierce and loud. 'Reserve your shouts,' said the Emperor, 'till you take the field against the Persians, the Germans, and the Sarmatians. Be silent in the presence of your Sovereign and benefactor, who bestows upon you the corn, the clothing, and the money of the provinces. Be silent, or I shall no longer style you soldiers, but *citizens*; if those indeed who disclaim the laws of Rome deserve to be ranked among the meanest of the people.' His words inflamed the fury of the legion, and their brandished arms

already threatened his person. 'Your courage,' resumed the intrepid Alexander, 'would be more nobly displayed in the field of battle; *me* you may destroy, you cannot intimidate, and the severe justice of the Republic would punish your crime and revenge my death.' The soldiers still persisting in their seditious clamour, the Emperor pronounced with a loud voice the decisive sentence, '*Citizens!* lay down your arms and depart in peace to your respective habitations.' The storm ceased, the soldiers, with grief and shame, yielded up their arms and military ensigns; and retired in confusion, not to their camp but to the different inns of the city. Alexander enjoyed, during thirty days, their humiliation; nor did he restore them to their former position till he had punished their ringleaders. That grateful legion served the Emperor gallantly in the Persian campaign to which he led them from Antioch, gained him a great victory over the enemy; and shared in his subsequent triumph at Rome. Scarcely had he tasted repose from his Persian war, before he received the intelligence that the Germans had crossed the Rhine and were invading Gaul. He at once set out to encounter this new enemy, and proceeded vigorously to restore the relaxed discipline of the Gallican troops. The officer to whom he entrusted this difficult task was a gigantic Thracian named Maximin, whose career was very singular. Thirty-two years before this period Septimius Severus, returning from an Eastern expedition, halted in Thrace to celebrate the birthday of his son Geta with military games. The country crowded to the spectacle, and a young barbarian of gigantic stature earnestly solicited in his rude dialect, that he might be allowed to contend for the prize of wrestling. As the pride of the Roman soldier would have been hurt by his being supposed inferior to a barbarian, he was matched with the stoutest fol-

lowers of the camp, sixteen of whom he successively laid on the ground. His victory was rewarded by some trifling gifts and permission to enlist in the troops. The next day the happy barbarian was distinguished head and shoulders above a crowd of recruits, dancing and exulting after the rude fashion of this country. As soon as he perceived that he had attracted the Emperor's notice, he instantly ran up to his horse and followed him on foot, without the least appearance of fatigue, in a long and rapid career. 'Thracian,' said Severus, with astonishment, 'art thou disposed to wrestle after thy race?' 'Most willingly,' replied the unwearied youth; and almost in a breath, overthrew seven of the strongest soldiers in the army. A gold collar was the prize of his matchless vigour and activity; he was immediately appointed to serve in the horse-guards, who always attended the person of the sovereign; and quickly rose to the rank of centurion, and of tribune, making by his skill and energy his soldiers the best disciplined of the whole army. But to all the ferocity and strength of the Thracian, Maximin, for that was his name, united the craft and treachery for which that country was notorious; so finding the troops ripe for revolt at the Emperor's stringent reforms, he entered into a conspiracy against Alexander, effected his murder, in the thirteenth year of his reign, and sprung to the throne over the corpse of his benefactor.

MAXIMIN, the new Emperor, realizes all the tales told of the giants of the olden time. He was between eight and nine feet in height, could tire down a horse at the gallop; break its leg by a blow; crumble stones in his hand; tear up trees by their roots; overturn thirty wrestlers successively; and maintained this prodigious force by eating forty pounds of meat, and drinking seven gallons of wine daily. This giant presented, for the first time, the spectacle of a bar-

barian master of the Roman world. Other Emperors had been born in distant portions of the Empire; an African had trampled on Roman greatness in the person of Septimius Severus; and a Phœnician priest in Elagabalus; but Africa was a Roman province and Emesa a Roman town. But here sat the colossal representative of the terrible giants of Thrace, speaking a jargon none could easily understand; fierce, haughty, revengeful; cherishing a ferocious contempt of the subjects who trembled before him, and a hatred against them implanted in him in his childhood, by the patriotic songs with which the warriors of his race kept alive their love of liberty. Maximin treated the Empire as a conquered country; seized on all the wealth he could pillage, melted all the golden statues, as valuable from their artistic beauty as for the metal of which they were composed; and marched towards Rome, threatening to exterminate the Senate and sack the devoted city.

In this extremity the Senate resumed its long-forgotten power and named GORDIAN and his son as Emperors, with instructions 'to resist the enemy.' But the Roman champions perished in a few weeks before the lieutenants of Maximin, and still the terrible giant came on, with his son, a giant like himself, but beautiful as a colossal Apollo, as second in command. Terrified at its approaching doom, the Senate once more nominated two Emperors, MAXIMUS, popular amongst the people by having formerly been a common carter, and BALBINUS, recommended to the nobles by his illustrious ancestry. Neither was popular with the army, so they associated with themselves a son and a nephew of the younger Gordian. Still the infuriated legions of Maximin thundered along the great Roman road towards the doomed capital. At Aquileia they first met serious opposition; and besieged the city, which, strong in its situation at the head of the Adriatic

gulf, gave such unexpected resistance to his assault, that his army became disaffected, and the Thracian tyrant was slain, with his son, by a band of Prætorians.

‘What reward may we expect,’ said Maximius to his colleague Balbinus, ‘for delivering Rome from a monster?’ ‘The love of the Senate, of the people, and of all mankind,’ said Balbinus cheerfully. ‘Alas!’ replied his wiser partner—‘Alas! I dread the hatred of the soldiers, and the fatal effects of their resentment.’ A few months justified his forebodings, for the Prætorians mutinied, and massacred these ‘Emperors of the Senate,’ as they were scornfully called in the camp.

The third GORDIAN, a youth of high promise, was the next master of Rome; but just as he was announcing to the Senate the success of his expedition against the Persians, he was murdered in a mutiny of the troops, who raised to the Empire the Prætorian Præfect, an Arab by birth, and, like all his countrymen, in his youth a robber by profession.

PHILIP THE ARAB possessed signal ability and courage, but he did not long enjoy his blood-stained honours. Just as he had celebrated with dazzling magnificence in the Capitol the secular games, on the accomplishment of the full period of a thousand years from the foundation of Rome, he received information of a formidable insurrection on the banks of the Danube. Trajanus Decius was despatched to suppress it; but no sooner had joined his army, than he was compelled to assume the imperial diadem, and he slew Philip in a battle near Verona.

TRAJANUS DECIUS reigned only two short years, but they were rendered horrible in the annals of Christianity by the most sanguinary persecution that had yet been inflicted upon it by Rome, and which shall soon claim our notice. Retri-



bution would seem visible in the simultaneous appearance of the GOTHs, for the first time, among the fierce nations by whom the Roman Empire now began to be regarded as a common prey, rather than as a common enemy.

The origin of this mighty people, henceforth the fiercest foe of the Roman Empire, and destined at length to overturn it, is involved in such deep obscurity as the utmost researches of ethnologists have been unable to remove. The most general opinion is, that they were a powerful branch of the great Indo-Teutonic race, by which both Northern Asia and Northern Europe were peopled at some remote period.

*Got* in Icelandic signifies a soldier, and *Geta* a wanderer; names which display the passion for military glory, and the spirit of independence, which characterized the great Northern race destined by Providence, as Montesquieu observes, to be the powerful instrument which broke the chains rivetted in the South by Rome, for the subjection of mankind. So, according to Gibbon, the Goths, instead of being regarded by us as mere barbarians, have acquired a *domestic claim* to our attention and regard. Indeed Bishop Warburton thus ingeniously points out the free spirit which inspired the Goths in their worship, and which so strongly actuates ourselves, that we have adopted their architecture:—‘ This Northern people having been accustomed during the freedom of Paganism to worship the Deity in *groves*, when their new religion required covered edifices, they ingeniously projected to make them resemble groves as nearly as the distance of architecture would permit; and with what skill and success they executed the project, appears from hence, that no attentive observer ever viewed a regular avenue of well-grown trees, but it presently put him in mind of the long vista through a Gothic cathedral; or even entered one of the larger and more elegant edifices of this kind, but it pre-

sented it to his imagination ; and this alone is what can be truly called the Gothic style of building.'

This new and formidable invader, after having been for ages settled in Scandinavia, now, without any apparent cause except the cry to heaven of Christian blood, suddenly left their Northern shores, swept along the lower shore of the Baltic, followed the course of the Dnieper and the Don, turned south-west, ravaged the province of Dacia, crossed the Danube, and poured like a torrent of fire upon the Roman dominions. Decius paused in his bloody persecution of Christians, and immediately marched against the enemy. He was defeated in the first engagement, and the Goths succeeded in capturing Philippopolis and its great magazine. Decius, having recruited his forces with the best legions of the army, again took the field, and Roman military science gained the day ; but, it being his aim to inflict upon them such an overthrow as should for ever deter them from renewing their invasions of the Empire, he incautiously followed up his advantage with wearied troops. Another battle was fought, in which the Goths, animated with the terrible energy and courage of their race, and being skilfully posted, according to their custom, on the edge of a morass, resisted all the efforts of the Roman forces to break them ; and young Decius having fallen, the Emperor, burning to revenge the death of his son, plunged his charger furiously into the morass, sunk struggling into its absorbing depth, and disappeared. The Roman army suffered immense loss, and the Goths were in no state to prosecute their victory.

Anarchy chiefly characterizes the following twenty years, during which several competitors for the throne gained it by the sword and perished by the sword, ending in the election by the army of Aurelian, the son of a poor peasant of Sirmium, a city on the Danube, who had been raised

from the ranks to high military command and fame by his own genius and valour.

AURELIAN seemed reserved to show what could yet be accomplished by an Imperial hero. His first great exploit, after assuming the purple, was meeting the Goths—who had meanwhile ravaged Greece and threatened Italy—in a bloody battle, to which night, not victory on either side, gave a temporary suspension. Wearied with mutual slaughter, and entangled in piles of mangled bodies of men and horses, both parties shrank from renewing the undecided combat, and a treaty was made by which the Emperor ceded to the invaders all Dacia beyond the Danube, and agreed to make the river the Roman boundary in that direction; while the Goths furnished a body of cavalry as auxiliaries to the Romans. This treaty added the fame of a statesman to Aurelian, for it was considered to have greatly strengthened the Empire; but, like other diplomatic schemes of our day, it was over-ruled by Providence to the very contrary.

The German Alemanni, or *Allmen*, to denote at once their various lineage and their common bravery, were then ravaging Lombardy. These were the next foes against whom Aurelian turned his arms, and he inflicted on them so many sanguinary defeats as to free Italy from their detested presence. The Vandals, a numerous and warlike race, spreading along the banks of the Oder, and seacoast of Pomerania, next fled before his eagles, after having for several years overrun the Roman provinces. Having defeated Tetricus, the usurper of Gaul, Spain and Britain, and thus secured the western and northern frontiers, he marched against a female antagonist, the celebrated Zenobia, the widowed Queen of Palmyra.

Palmyra, or Tadmor, was built by Solomon, and the situation of that beautiful spot, a green island in the midst of a sandy ocean, almost equidistant between the Euphrates and

the Phœnician coast, pointed it out to the wisest of kings, as a suitable place for commercial enterprise, and admirably adapted to promote his great idea of changing the line of intercourse between the East and West, from the Red Sea to the Euphrates, and rendering Palestine, not Egypt, the great emporium of the nations. Even after the decline of the kingdom of Israel, Palmyra continued to form the chief station between the Euphrates and Asia Minor, for the caravans employed in the Indian and Arabian trade. It grew in splendour, for its last king Odenathus ruled all Syria and Mesopotamia, and was acknowledged as colleague in the Roman Empire by one of Aurelian's feeble predecessors. After the murder of that prince, his high-spirited widow Zenobia wielded the sceptre for six years with such skill and courage that she added Egypt to her dominions, and assumed the proud title of Queen of the East. Such was the woman against whom Aurelian led in person his Roman legions. Zenobia was defeated in two bravely fought battles; Palmyra was besieged; capitulated; revolted; and the angry conqueror after having again captured it, inflicted on this city of romance the usual punishment exacted by Roman law in such cases, by reducing it completely to ruins, of which the extent, beauty, and magnificence still amaze the traveller.

When the Syrian Queen was brought into Aurelian's presence, he sternly asked, 'How she had presumed to rise in arms against the Emperors of Rome?' 'Because,' firmly and respectfully replied Zenobia, 'I disdained to consider as Roman Emperors, an Aureolus, or a Gallienus. You alone I acknowledge as my conqueror and my sovereign.'

Having crushed a revolt in Egypt, Aurelian returned to Rome; and since the foundation of the city no triumph was ever celebrated to welcome a conqueror with superior pride and magnificence. The procession was opened by twenty

elephants, four royal tigers, and above two hundred of the most curious animals from every climate of the North, the South, the East and West. They were followed by 1600 gladiators, ready to butcher each other in the Coliseum for the amusement of the cruel populace. The wealth of Asia, the arms and ensigns of so many conquered nations, the magnificent plate and wardrobe of the Syrian Queen; and the rich presents received by the Emperor, particularly a great number of crowns of gold, the offerings of grateful cities; were carried along on lofty poles or on chariots, displayed in exact symmetry or artful disorder. Then followed, in rich or singular dresses, the ambassadors of the most remote parts of the earth, of Æthiopia, Arabia, Persia, Bactriana, India, and China. A long train of captives next appeared, reluctant witnesses of Aurelian's victories—Goths, Vandals, Sarmatians, Alemanni, Franks, Gauls, Britons, Syrians, and Egyptians, each people distinguished by its peculiar inscription; and the title of Amazons was bestowed on ten Gothic heroines taken in arms. Every eye turned upon Tetricus and the Queen of the East. The former and his son were dressed in Gallic trowsers—a mode of dress still considered in Italy a barbarian fashion—a saffron tunic and a robe of purple. Zenobia justified all the praises lavished on her as the most lovely as well as the most heroic of her sex. She was of olive complexion, her teeth were of pearly whiteness, and her large black eyes sparkled with uncommon lustre, tempered by the most attractive sweetness. Ever and anon her strong harmonious voice was raised to cheer some drooping captive; she was confined by fetters of gold; a slave supported the massive gold chain which encircled her beautiful neck, and she almost fainted under the intolerable weight of her ornaments and jewels. She walked before the magnificent chariot, in which she once hoped to enter the

gates of Rome as its conqueror. It was followed by two still more sumptuous chariots of Odenathus, and the Persian monarch. The triumphal car of Aurelian, a trophy snatched from a Gothic king, on this memorable occasion was drawn by four stags; and the most illustrious of the Senate, the people and army, closing the procession, which was so long and various, that, although it opened with the dawn of day, the slow majesty of its stately march ascended not the Capitol before the shades of evening had fallen; and it was already dark before the Emperor returned to the palace. Liberal largesses to the army and people, combats of gladiators, hunting of wild beasts, theatrical spectacles, and games of the Circus, kept all Rome in an ecstasy of enjoyment for several successive days. All the temples of the city glittered with Aurelian's votive offerings; and he erected on the Quirinal Hill a magnificent temple to the Sun, as the patron deity to whom he owed his life and fortunes, and presented to it the enormous gift of fifteen thousand pounds' weight of gold, together with the images of Belus and the Sun which he had brought from Palmyra. He also behaved towards his royal captives with a generous clemency seldom exercised by Roman conquerors, for it was their custom to strangle in prison such princes as had unsuccessfully fought for liberty, as soon as the triumphal pomp had ascended to the Capitol. Zenobia and Tetricus ended their days in elegant villas presented to them by the Emperor, with a sum sufficient to secure to them the enjoyments, if not the luxuries of life.

Aurelian had also 'deserved well' of the Romans for the magnificent walls with which he fortified Rome, and which were so solidly built, that they are substantially the same as those which surround the modern city, with the exception of the part beyond the Tiber. But his attempts at a reform of the mint, and restoring the coin to purity from its base state,

raised a formidable insurrection in Rome ; and this mode of repaying his services exasperated his haughty spirit to deeds of cruelty, which caused his assassination in the sixth year of his reign. During the nine following years, six fantastic phantoms, 'which the likeness of a kingly crown have on,' pass before our eyes—Tacitus, Florianus, Probus, Carus, Carinus, and Numerianus—and at last we mark the powerful and substantial form of Diocletian, and feel that we have to do once more with a real Roman Emperor.

DIOCLETIAN'S parents had been slaves ; and his own name was originally Docles, being so called after his mother's birth-place in Dalmatia ; but as the fortunate slave rose in the world he changed it to the Grecian harmony of Diocles, and at length to the Roman majesty of Diocletianus. Following the profession of arms, then the path pursued by all aspirants to fame and greatness, he had distinguished himself highly in the Persian war, was successively promoted to the government of Mæsia, the honours of the Consulship, and the important command of the guards of the palace. By the voice of the army the slave was suddenly summoned to the throne, on the discovery of the murder of Numerianus ; and his able statesmanship, for twenty-one long years, secured him on the dangerous eminence to which he had been elevated by his valiant soldiership. Like Augustus, Diocletian possessed a vigorous mind, improved by the experience and study of mankind ; dexterity and application to business ; a judicious mixture of liberality and economy, of mildness and rigour ; profound dissimulation under the guise of military frankness ; steadiness to pursue his ends ; flexibility to vary his means ; and above all, the great art of submitting his own passions, as well as those of others, to the interest of his ambition, and of colouring his ambition with the most specious pretences of justice and public utility. Like Augus-

tus also, Diocletian, after his accession, never employed force when policy could effect his purpose ; and each of those princes made such radical changes in the Roman Constitution, that he may be considered as the founder of a new Empire. Like Augustus, too, his first act was to avenge the murder of his popular predecessor. Conscious that the station he had filled exposed him to suspicion, and astutely perceiving that his future fortunes depended on some decisive act which would strike terror into his rivals, he ascended the public tribunal, and raising his eyes towards the Sun, solemnly professed his own innocence, in the presence of that all-seeing Deity. Then, assuming the tone of a Sovereign and judge, he commanded that the late Emperor's father-in-law, Arrius Aper, his rival candidate for the throne, should be brought in chains to the foot of the tribunal. 'This man,' said he, 'is the murderer of Numerianus ;' and without giving him a moment to enter on a dangerous justification, he drew his sword, and buried it in the breast of his unfortunate rival. A charge supported by such decisive proof was admitted without contradiction, and the legions, with thunders of applause, acknowledged the justice and authority of the Emperor.

The victim had filled the high office of Prætorian Præfect ; but the Senate was satisfied, or seemed to be so, when the master of thirty legions alleged as the justification of his deed of blood an old prophecy and a pun, predicting that the slaughter of *Aper* (a wild boar) would ensure the safety of the State. His next act was to take as his partner in the labours of government his friend and fellow-soldier MAXIMIAN, whose ignorance of letters, carelessness of laws, and rusticity of appearance and manners, betrayed on the throne the meanness of his birth, for he was the son of a poor peasant of Sirmium. Maximian had distinguished himself on every frontier of the Empire by his valour, military



talents, and fidelity, so he was a most important ally to Diocletian, who made even his vices useful; for, insensible to pity and fearless of consequences, Maximian was the ready instrument of every act of cruelty which his own artful policy might at once suggest and disclaim. But Diocletian soon perceived even this division of power was insufficient to protect the Empire, which, assailed on every side by hosts of fierce barbarians, required on all its frontiers the presence of a great army and an Emperor. So he once more divided his unwieldy power, and with the inferior title of *Cæsars*, conferred on two other generals of approved prowess an equal share of the Sovereign authority. GALERIUS, a rude soldier, surnamed Armentarius, from his original calling of a herdsman, and CONSTANTIUS, a gentle though valiant noble, who from his pale complexion was called *Chlorus*, these were the two generals invested with the secondary honours of the Empire. To strengthen the bonds of political by those of domestic union, each of the Emperors assumed the character of a father to one of the *Cæsars*, Diocletian to Galerius, and Maximian to Constantius; and each, obliging them to divorce their former wives, bestowed his daughter in marriage on his adopted son. These four princes distributed amongst themselves the wide Roman world. The defence of Gaul, Spain, and Britain, was intrusted to Constantius; Galerius was stationed on the banks of the Danube, as the protector of the Illyrian provinces; Italy and Africa were considered as the department of Maximian; and for his own peculiar portion Diocletian reserved Thrace, Egypt, and the rich countries of Asia.

Each of them was Sovereign within his own jurisdiction; but their united authority extended over the whole Empire; and each was prepared to assist his colleagues with his counsels or presence so regularly, that their union was compared to a chorus of music, of which the harmony was regulated

and maintained by the skilful hand of the first artist. The astute Emperor calculated, that to entrust large armies to experienced commanders was only to put it in their power to become aspirants for the throne ; and that the only way to secure their fidelity was to give them such a share in the imperial government as should engage their own interest in its preservation ; whilst the strength of the legions being wielded by four partners of Sovereignty, the despair of successfully vanquishing four formidable rivals might intimidate the ambition of an aspiring general. He overlooked the improbability of the partition of power being perpetuated in such strong hands as those of his colleagues, and under the guidance of one such skilful head as his own. The principle of division thus introduced, in the course of a few years occasioned the perpetual separation of the Eastern and Western Empires. This system was accompanied by another very material disadvantage—a more expensive establishment, and consequently a heavy increase of taxes, particularly of those on the land and person ; for instead of a modest retinue of slaves and freedmen, such as had contented the simple greatness of Augustus and Trajan, four magnificent courts were now established in various parts of the Empire, in which the Sovereigns contended with each other and the Persian monarch, for the vain superiority of pomp and luxury, and in the multitude of their courtiers, officers, and servants. From this period to the extinction of the Empire, there arose one uninterrupted series of clamours and complaints against taxation, as the intolerable and increasing grievance of the times.

But the new system worked admirably at first, in restoring order and security to the Empire. Gaul was now furiously agitated by a peasant-war, very similar to that which in the fourteenth century successively ravaged both France and

England. The populace at last, driven to despair by the complicated tyranny of their own nobles, and of the Roman soldiers and officers of revenue, rose in multitudes, armed with rustic weapons, and with irresistible fury. The ploughman became a foot soldier, the shepherd mounted on horseback, the deserted villages and open towns were abandoned to the flames, and the ravages of the peasants, which were equal to those of the fiercest barbarians, for they asserted their natural rights with the most savage cruelty. Maximian's first exploit was recovering Gaul from the hands of the peasants, over whom his legions obtained the victory which the strength of union and discipline, under an able commander, always secures over a licentious and divided multitude. He inflicted a terrible retaliation on the peasants found in arms; the affrighted remnant returned to their dwellings; and their effort for freedom served only to confirm their slavery.

Britain had now for some time been altogether dismembered from the Empire; and its loss had been sincerely lamented by the Romans, who very early, with their characteristic sagacity, set a very high value on our noble island, as destined to be one of their most lucrative provinces, from its numerous convenient harbours, its temperate climate, its soil fertile in corn except when rich in minerals, its pastures covered with flocks, and its woods, at once free from wild beasts and venomous serpents, and furnished with royal oak, ash, and beech, most useful for the public buildings of Rome. The British Sovereign Carausius had, during the seven years of his revolt, surprisingly developed the national resources. Born on the confines of the Franks, he courted the friendship of that formidable race, by the flattering imitation of their dress and manners. He invited from the Continent a great number of skilful artists, and displayed, on a variety of coins that are still extant, his taste and opulence. His fleets rode

triumphant in the Channel, commanded the mouths of the Seine and of the Rhine, ravaged the coasts of the ocean, and diffused beyond the Pillars of Hercules the terror of his name. Under his command, Britain, destined by the providence of God in a future age to rule the sea, already assumed its natural station of a great maritime power. Constantius was fully three years employed in preparing a fleet adequate to the conquest of Britain ; and meanwhile secured the coast of Gaul by the capture of Boulogne, invaded the country of the Franks, and deprived the Britons of the assistance of those powerful allies. The time for the invasion having arrived, Constantius divided his forces, that he might likewise divide the attention and resistance of the enemy. So imperfect in those times was the art of navigation, that orators have celebrated the daring courage of the Romans, who ventured to set sail with a side wind, and on a stormy day. The weather changed, and proved favourable to their enterprise. Under the cover of a thick fog they escaped the British fleet, which had been stationed off the Isle of Wight to receive them, landed on some part of the West coast, and convinced the Britons that a superiority of naval strength will not always protect their country from foreign invasion. No sooner had the Roman admiral disembarked the Imperial troops, than he set fire to his ships ; and, as the expedition proved successful, his heroic conduct was universally admired. A single battle, as it has often happened, decided the fate of this great island ; and the valour of Constantius reduced Britain once more into subjection to the yoke of Rome.

Diocletian had objects of far more difficulty and importance to effect in securing the peace of the Continent, and defence of the principal rivers that bounded the Empire. His policy provided for the supremacy of Rome, by encouraging a spirit of dissension among the barbarians, and by

strengthening the fortifications of the Roman frontiers. Hence, during his long reign, by bribery and intrigue he contrived that the Goths, the Vandals, and the Alemanni should be incessantly engaged in wasting each other's strength by destructive hostilities; for whosoever vanquished, they vanquished the enemies of Rome. The Romans enjoyed the bloody spectacle often furnished to them by this cruel policy, and congratulated each other that the mischiefs of civil war were now experienced only by the barbarians. They had also the pleasing duty of practising every expedient that their wily Emperor could suggest to render the immense chain of fortifications along the frontiers firm and impenetrable. Whenever the barbarians, suspending their destructive animosities, invaded the Roman dominions, they were captured, and by Diocletian's new policy, exchanging death for slavery, they were distributed in the provinces which had been depopulated, where it was a subject of flattering exultation among the Roman colonists, that the barbarian, so lately an object of terror, now cultivated their lands, drove their cattle to the neighbouring fair, and contributed by his labour to the public plenty, being always denied the use of arms, except when it was found expedient to enrol him for military service. But they forgot that multitudes of secret enemies, insolent from favour or desperate from oppression, were thus retained captive in the heart of the Empire; and certain, in an hour of weakness, to summon their savage kindred to their rescue.

Diocletian's natural ferocity found terrible exercise in crushing an African insurrection; and after an eight months' siege, Alexandria, wasted by fire and sword, implored his clemency in vain. Many thousands of the chief citizens were given up by him to promiscuous slaughter; and there were few obnoxious Egyptians who escaped a sentence of death or

exile. But his partner Galerius suffered an ignominious defeat in his first Persian campaign; on the same ground rendered memorable by the slaughter of Crassus and his ten legions. It was a plain of more than sixty miles, extending from the hills of Carrhæ to the Euphrates; a smooth and sandy desert, without a hillock, without a tree, and without a spring of fresh water. The Roman infantry, fainting with heat and thirst, could neither hope for victory if they preserved their ranks, nor break their ranks without being destroyed by the arrows and darts of a host of barbarians, mounted on the fleetest of Arab steeds, sweeping round them with the velocity and fury of a whirlwind. Diocletian received his conquered Caesar, not with the sympathy of a friend, but the indignation of an offended Sovereign; and Galerius, clothed in his purple, but degraded by his misfortune, was obliged to follow the Emperor's chariot about a mile on foot, and to exhibit before the whole Court the spectacle of his disgrace. It was by the most submissive entreaties that he obtained permission to retrieve his own honour, as well as that of the Roman arms, in the subsequent campaign, which resulted in the overthrow of the enemy.

But the previous defeat of Galerius still rankled in his proud heart, and his mother, a fanatical worshipper of the 'Great Mother of the Gods;' who celebrated almost every day with a splendid sacrifice, followed by a banquet at which she required the presence of the whole Court; employed all her arts to convince him that his misfortune was due to the refusal of the Christians in his army to sacrifice to Cybele. So the winter of 302-303 saw Galerius at Nicomedia urging Diocletian to burn alive all Christians who should refuse to sacrifice to the gods of Ancient Romanism. The Emperor on the one side importuned by his royal colleague, on the other by his favourite philosophers, whose

animosity against Christianity was as intense as the Cæsar's, at length consented to issue an edict against the Christians, but stipulated that there should be no loss of life.

The festival of Terminalia was chosen for publishing the decree, because it was 'a fortunate day,' being inseparably connected with the stability of the Roman power, which was now endangered by the progress of Christianity. At dawn of day the Præfect of the city appeared at the door of the Christian Church in Nicomedia, attended by the officers of the city and of the Court. The doors were instantly thrown down; the Pagans beheld with astonishment the vacant space, and sought in vain for image or picture of the Christian's worship. They only found an humble table for the celebration of the LORD's Supper, a number of low benches for the people, a high seat from which the bishop used to read and expound the Holy Scriptures, and several rolls of the sacred books themselves, which were instantly committed to the flames, and the whole building razed to the ground. The fatal edict was framed in the sternest and most rigorous terms. Throughout the Roman Empire, the churches of the Christians were to be levelled with the earth; the Holy Scriptures were to be delivered up, under pain of death, by their legitimate guardians, the bishops and presbyters, to the Imperial officers, and publicly burnt—the philosophers thus hoping to extirpate the Book with which they so fiercely contested the supremacy of the human mind. All the property of the Church was confiscated, all Christian assemblies prohibited; Christians of rank were degraded from their offices; those of the plebeian order were deprived of the rights of Roman citizenship, which secured their persons from scourging or torture. Even Christian slaves were declared incapable of obtaining liberty; the whole race were placed without the pale of the law, disqualified from appealing to its protection,

but liable to bear all the burdens of the State, and amenable to all its penalties. An altar was placed before the tribunal of justice, on which the plaintiff was obliged to sacrifice before his cause could obtain a hearing. A rash Christian tore down this edict; who added insult to his offence by the contemptuous inscription, 'Such are the victories of the Emperors over the Goths and Sarmatians.' He was burnt, glorying in his act. On a sudden a fire burst out in the palace of Nicomedia, which spread almost to the chamber of the Emperor. Some attributed it to lightning, but the general voice of the pagans cast the guilt on the persecuted believers; and the consequences were most disastrous to the whole Christian community. Galerius immediately left Nicomedia, declaring his person not safe amongst Christians; and Diocletian giving way to his fears, instituted a most bloody inquisition in Nicomedia, for the proscribed race. The Imperial household was examined and some officers suffered death. Anthimus the bishop was beheaded; many were burnt alive, many laid bound, with stones round their necks in boats, rowed into the midst of the lake, and plunged into its deep waters. The Emperor Maximian's fierce temper only waited for the signal, and readily acceded to carry into effect the barbarous edicts of his colleague. Constantius made a show of concurrence by commanding the demolition of the Christians' churches, but abstained from all violence against their persons. Edict followed edict, rising in gradations of angry barbarity, was issued by the civil power, constantly goaded on by the united force of the pagan priesthood and the philosophic party. All the bishops, presbyters and deacons were crowded into the prisons intended for the basest malefactors. An Imperial decree prohibited the liberation of any of these prisoners unless they should deliver up their copies of the Scriptures



and consent to sacrifice to the gods of Rome. During these terrible scenes Diocletian entered into the twentieth year of his reign, and visited Rome, for the first time since his accession, to celebrate that era, always so memorable to the Emperors, and the success of his arms by the pomp of a Roman triumph. Maximian was his only companion in the glory of that day, and Africa, Britain, and Persia, the Rhine, the Danube, and the Nile, furnished their respective trophies, to this the last triumph that ever flattered Roman pride, for soon after this eventful period Rome ceased to be the capital of the Empire.

Diocletian's visit to Rome displays his astute policy in another and very remarkable phase. In the degenerate state of the Romans he justly calculated that an ostentation of magnificence would subdue the imagination of the multitude; that the monarch would be less exposed to the rude licence of the people and the soldiers, if his person was secluded from public view; and that by infusing into his subjects a superstitious veneration for his person, he would secure their servile submission. So this artful prince substituted the Persian manners for those of the Roman Court. From the time of Augustus to this period, with few and far between exceptions, the Emperors, conversing in a familiar manner among their fellow-citizens, received little more respect than that paid to Senators and magistrates. Their chief distinction was the Imperial or military robe of purple; whilst the Senatorial robe was marked by a broad, and the equestrian or knightly order by a narrow band or stripe of the same honourable hue. But Diocletian assumed the Persian diadem, a broad white fillet set with pearls—diamonds were then of less value, the art of cutting them being still unknown—which encircled his head. His flowing Oriental vestments were of silk and gold, and even his shoes were studded with

most precious gems. Assuming all the attributes of DIVINITY, he issued his edicts as 'divine oracles,' spoke in their preambles of his 'sacred majesty,' and of his *numen*, or deity; and rendered access to his 'sacred person,' every day more difficult by the institution of fresh forms and ceremonies. The avenues of his palace were strictly guarded by domestic officers; and the interior apartments were watched with a jealous vigilance, the most infallible symptom of Oriental despotism. When a subject was at length admitted to the Imperial presence, he was obliged, whatever might be his rank, to fall prostrate on the ground, and to adore the divinity of his lord and master, in the Eastern fashion, by kissing his feet in religious homage. And this superhuman pride, which characterises the Roman sovereigns from that period to the present hour, was introduced by one originally a slave!

The Prætorian Camp, which had so long oppressed the Senate, was latterly disposed to make common cause with that venerable assembly, as those haughty troops were conscious that the new system of government was gradually undermining their power. By the prudent measures of Diocletian their numbers were insensibly reduced, their privileges abolished, and their place as Imperial guards was supplied by two trustworthy legions of Illyricum, under the new titles of Jovians and Herculians. But the most fatal though secret wound which the Senate received from the hands of Diocletian was inflicted, as we shall see, by his crafty policy in setting the example to his successors of establishing the Imperial Court in a province. He selected Nicomedia as his abode, ostensibly on account of its admirable situation for governing his portion of the Empire, as it lay on the verge of Europe and Asia, almost at an equal distance between the Danube and the Euphrates. His colleague Maximian, at his suggestion, resided chiefly at Milan, whose situation at

the foot of the Alps was very convenient for watching the motions of the barbarians of Germany. Both those cities quickly rose to nearly the same level as Rome in political importance, weakened its dangerously commanding influence, and almost rivalled it in magnificence and splendour.

Diocletian's stay at Rome did not exceed two months, and notwithstanding the severity of a very cold and rainy winter, he began his progress towards the East, round the circuit of the Illyrian provinces. Though he made easy marches and was generally carried in a close litter, he contracted a painful malady which, before he reached Nicomedia, was become very alarming.

During the whole following winter he was confined to his palace, and when he once more appeared in public, had become so pale and emaciated as to be scarcely known by those to whom his person was the most familiar. He was only in his fifty-ninth year, but incessant wars and fatigue, intense application to business, and the cares of royalty, had brought on him all the infirmities of premature old age; and he resolved to resign the Empire, now that he had vanquished all his enemies and accomplished all his designs. The ceremony of his abdication was performed in a spacious plain, about three miles from Nicomedia, where a vast concourse of people had assembled, in fear and wonder, to behold that strange spectacle, the first ever seen, of a sovereign voluntarily resigning his crown. He ascended a lofty throne, and in a speech full of dignity and firmness, announced that he had resolved to pass the remainder of his days in honourable repose, to place his glory beyond the reach of fortune, and to relinquish the theatre of the world to his younger and more active associates. As soon as he had divested himself of his royal robes and ornaments, he withdrew from the gazing multitude, and, traversing the city in a covered chariot, proceeded

without delay to his favourite palace, about six miles from Salona, the principal city of his native province of Dalmatia. Maximian, on the same day, as it had been concerted, resigned the imperial dignity at Milan, and retired to his villa in Lucania. It is seldom that minds long very actively engaged in business, have formed the habit of conversing with themselves in solitude, and of finding in themselves sources of amusement and occupation ; so in retiring from active life, they soon regret the want of the engagements which they had so lately renounced as intolerably irksome. But Diocletian had preserved, or at least soon recovered, a taste for that employment which ‘calms, yet fills the mind ;’ and his leisure hours passed pleasantly away in planting and gardening. So when he was solicited, in after times, by his restless old colleague Maximian to reassume the reins of government, he rejected the temptation with a smile of pity, calmly observing, that if he could show Maximian the cabbages which he had planted with his own hands at Salona, he should no longer be urged to relinquish the enjoyment of happiness for the pursuit of power. But fear, sorrow, and discontent—without the balm which the Gospel alone supplies to their wounds—soon pursued him into his retreat. He could not be ignorant of the troubles which afflicted the Empire after his abdication ; he could not be indifferent to their consequences. His tenderness, or at least his pride, was deeply wounded by the misfortunes of his wife and daughter ; and he received some affronts from his successors on the throne which so embittered his proud spirit that, it is said, he slew himself during a paroxysm of shame and sorrow, in the ninth year of his retirement from the cares of office.

GALERIUS and CONSTANTIUS had now become Emperors ; and a new division of the Empire necessarily followed, of

which Galerius seized the lion's share ; retaining to himself all the Eastern provinces, together with Italy and Africa, and leaving to Constantius only Spain, Gaul, and Britain. Galerius also took upon himself the appointment of the two Cæsars, Severus, an old officer, to whom he consigned Italy and Africa, and Maximian, his nephew, to whom he entrusted the Asiatic provinces. He was now master of the East ; and in the East the persecution of the Christians continued to be carried on by this their most implacable enemy, and his merciless nephew, with unmitigated severity.

The philosophers of the day, who called themselves the New Platonists, whilst they were constrained by the Christian Apologists to agree with them in such points of faith as the existence of God, the immortality of the soul, the necessity of a godly life, and a future state of rewards and punishments, 'attacked,' says Gibbon, 'the remainder of their theological system with all the fury of civil war ; but by mistaking the true object of philosophy, they contributed much less to improve than to corrupt the human understanding.' The New Platonists, neglecting natural and mathematical science, exhausted their strength in logical subtleties ; attempted to explore the secrets of the invisible world ; pretended to possess the secret of disengaging the soul from its corporeal prison ; claimed a familiar intercourse with dæmons and spirits ; and by a very singular revolution, converted the study of philosophy into that of magic ! Several of those New Platonists, especially Celsus and Porphyry, display, in their attacks upon Christianity, at least as much subtle ingenuity, caustic sarcasm, and malignant unfairness, as any infidel writer of our own times. But it is important to remark, that they understood the laws of historic evidence too well, and lived too near the Apostolic age, to dream of denying the Holy Scripture to be genuine books of history. They also

admit all our SAVIOUR'S miracles to be facts ; though they impute them to *magic*, and thus very artfully endeavour to discredit the tenets of His rival *philosophy*, especially those of our ruin by sin, our redemption by faith in His atoning blood, and our regeneration by the Holy Spirit. When we remember Seneca's characteristic question, and its answer—'In what does Jupiter excel the good man?'—'Because he lives longer,'—we see at a glance how mortifying these humbling doctrines of Christianity must have been to the pride of those New Platonists ; and that their efforts to obtain magical powers were to rival the Christian miracles.

It is also highly noteworthy, that accustomed as the New Platonists were to accuse Christianity as destructive of the unity of the Empire, by creating a state within a State, yet that not one of them ever alludes to St. Peter, or any of his self-styled successors, as supreme head of the Church throughout the Roman world. If such were the case, and if he reigned in Rome as 'Prince of the Apostles,' as modern Romanists pretend, these adversaries of Christianity would have quickly discovered and gladly paraded the fact, as their best possible proof, and as that most adapted to irritate the Emperors, whose jealousy against such as should act independently of their despotic government was so great, that they could hardly tolerate a committee to collect subscriptions for building an aqueduct. But then, as now, those infidel assaults upon the Gospel were overruled by a merciful Providence to its more careful study ; and the defenders of the faith were victorious.

Alexandria, then the focus of light, sent forth from her famous Christian 'Catechetical School,' or theological college, several of those worthies, during the second and third centuries, of whom Clement and Origen were the most remarkable. The former was an Athenian scholar, who, according to the fashion of those times, set out upon a tour in quest of in-

struction, and travelled far and wide to learn Divine truth from the most eminent masters. From Greece he crossed over to Italy; then explored the East; and finally, in Alexandria, encountered the Christian philosopher Pantænus, who presided over the Catechetical School. 'He,' says Clement, 'though found last, in ability was first. I found rest when I had hunted down this game in the coverts of Egypt. Truly Sicilian was this bee, and culling from the flowers of the meadow of the Apostles and Prophets, he engendered in the minds of his hearers a pure knowledge.' Here Clement distinguished himself so highly that he was chosen to succeed Pantænus; and received the title of Alexandrinus.

Clement's vigorous European intellect here laboured to correct the peculiar defects of the Alexandrian mode of thought and habits of life. The violent heats at Alexandria compelled the body to inactivity and the mind to dreaminess; and even if the body were active, the uniform expanse of swamps or sand around the city had nothing to feed the imagination, and failed to supply, from outward observation, that sound mental health which contact with bold or beautiful scenery is most likely to give. Hence Egypt was the native soil of mysticism, and the dreamy speculations of Plato fascinated all classes of scholars; even the numerous Jews, who settled there with rare privileges, and rising in wealth amid the influx of commerce, were brought within the charmed ring of his admirers. To select such truths as the New Platonists might have discovered by the light of nature, and to show their harmony with Divine Revelation, whilst rejecting emphatically all of their dogmas opposed to it—this was the arduous task which Clement undertook in those of his works still extant, and which he called 'mixing the Divine Revelation with the doctrines of Philosophy, like gold amid sand.' In the first, called the *Protreptic*, or *Hortatory*

Address, he shows the shocking iniquity and folly of Paganism ; asserts the unity of God out of the mouths of their own philosophers and poets ; exhibits the beauty and wisdom of the Scriptures ; and introduces the SAVIOUR as exhorting all 'the weary and heavy laden to go to Him for rest.' His second is 'The Pædagogus,' or Teacher, in which the SAVIOUR re-appears under the character of the young convert's teacher, giving him minute directions for a holy life. *Stromata*, or Tapestry-work, is the name of his third work, and its title shows its nature, as random recollections of his multifarious reading, in which sublime verses of Holy Scripture mingle curiously with beautiful quotations from Pindar and Æschylus, &c. He also wrote a beautiful little treatise on 'The Salvation of the Rich Man,' in which may be seen the affecting story of the Apostle John and the Robber, who had once been his follower, and whom he sought out and reclaimed in his haunts of shame and sin.

ORIGEN was the son of a poor Christian teacher in Alexandria, named Leonidas ; and, even in his childhood, he showed such love for the Holy Scriptures, and asked such subtle questions on their inner meaning, that his father often checked his curiosity ; but ceased not to thank God on his knees for such a son ; and, often with noiseless step approaching the child's bed—after gazing on the lovely face, smiling in sleep as if in converse with angels—he used reverently uncover, and kiss his breast, saying to his mother, 'Because it is a temple in which the Holy Spirit is preparing Himself a dwelling.' At fifteen Origen was placed by his father in the Catechetical School under Clement, whose penetrating eye soon discovered his genius, and who warmly encouraged him to persevere in the study of the Scriptures. 'Search the Scriptures, my son, as freely as I have done ; search them with the desire of finding the truth. He who examines them



without wishing to find the truth, finds nothing ; for God says, "Ye shall find me when ye shall search for me with all your heart."

When Clement was forced by his friends to fly to Palestine during the persecution of Septimius Severus, Leonidas was dragged off from his family for martyrdom ; and when Origen exclaimed, 'My father shall not go to death alone ; I will walk by his side. My father shall not confess CHRIST alone ; I will run to the executioners, crying that CHRIST is my SAVIOUR and my GOD, and I will offer to them my head ; his mother thus calmed his impetuous spirit, 'Is it not enough that those wicked men have taken my husband ? Will you take my son also ? When persecution comes upon us, we must, in God's strength, Origen, bear it with fortitude, but it is sinful to seek it.' Whilst he slept, she took away his clothes ; and all his entreaties could not succeed in prevailing on her to restore them, till he promised obedience to her admonitions ; and wrote to his father to suffer alone and fearlessly for CHRIST — 'Take care not to abandon your faith for love of us.'

Origen was chosen to fill the office of Clement ; but, willing to be independent of popular support, he sold his books, a collection of beautiful copies of the ancient authors, which he had been forming at great pains for his own use, to a literary amateur, on condition that he should allow him four *oboli* (sixpence) a day, on which sum he thenceforth subsisted, never possessing more than one coat at a time, and being often without shoes. From his 'iron diligence' he soon gained the title of the 'Adamantine ;' and admiring crowds frequented his lectures on the Scriptures, listening in breathless attention ; or keeping up a very animated interchange of question and answer ; or—as was then the custom even in churches—bursting into repeated rounds of applause.

He urged his hearers, each with his own hands and not by those of others alone, to draw Truth from the well-spring of the Holy Scriptures. 'I do not,' he earnestly said, 'call you merely to a faith which knows not the foundations on which the Truth rests, but to the knowledge which shall make you understand the Truth itself; and to this end you must study the Scriptures. They are one grand and harmonious instrument made by God, of which the separate parts are all in tune like the strings of a lyre. In the Scriptures you will find no false note, no error, no contradiction; nothing is insignificant or superfluous; every thing has been written under the immediate direction of the Holy Spirit. . . . If in reading the Scriptures you meet with a thought which is a rock of offence, accuse yourself alone; and despair not of seeing that very same rock bursting open and sending forth streams of living water. But pray for the HOLY SPIRIT's teaching, for that is above all things needful to enable you to understand the Scriptures. This prayer the SAVIOUR enjoins, in saying not only "Seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you;" but "Ask and it shall be given you." Search the Scriptures, thus guided by the HOLY SPIRIT; then there will not remain one line, one iota, in which you cannot find the wisdom of God. He who will not have men to appear before Him empty-handed, certainly will not appear empty-handed before us; and in all His words we will breathe the breath of the fulness of Heaven.' Hence a felicitous mode of allegorizing the Scripture passages which seem least likely to afford a spiritual sense is the characteristic of Origen, sometimes fanciful but generally edifying. For instance, after vindicating the measurement of the Ark given by Moses; and proving that he who 'was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians'—of which *mathematics* were the most cultivated

branch—had left no room for cavil at his calculations; he suddenly traces the Christian's *hope* in the heavenward spire in which the building rises above; his *faith* in its secure support in the deeps unseen below; and his *love* in the wide embrace with which the mighty ship infolds clean and unclean animals alike, whilst reserving an inmost abode of affection for all the children of God. And yet a careful examination of Origen's 'Eight Books against Celsus' will supply the student with most admirable materials for the refutation of the opponents of Holy Scripture in our own day. The great Bishop Butler turned to noble account in his immortal 'Analogy' Origen's 'singularly sagacious observation, that he who believes the Scripture to have proceeded from Him who is the Author of nature, may well expect to find the same sort of difficulties in it as are found in the constitution of Nature.'

It is said that Origen wrote six thousand works. 'My studies,' says he, 'scarcely leave me time for eating; and after I have taken my meal, do not suppose that I am able to go out or take rest. No; I am then obliged to pursue philological labour, and the correction of manuscripts. Even during the night I cannot sleep; scientific researches absorb the greater portion of it. I do not speak of the time from the early morning till two or three o'clock in the afternoon; because all those who have any taste for heavenly things spend this time in reading and studying the Word of God.' To Origen we owe the grand idea of a Polyglott Bible. At his desire a rich follower spent his wealth in buying many of the precious manuscripts which found their way to this famous seat of learning; and in paying scribes for copying those in the library of 700,000 volumes, the largest in the world. See him engaged in these gigantic labours. Seven scribes are rapidly covering their parchment rolls from his dictation,

and a number of persons, including women and girls, skilful in beautiful handwriting, are making elegant copies of manuscripts. He has undertaken the gigantic task of comparing all the chief versions of the Scriptures with the Hebrew original. So looking over the shoulder of this scribe, you see a great roll of parchment divided into four columns, in each of which appears the Hebrew text or one of the Greek versions; these are his 'Tetraploi.' Look over the shoulder of that scribe, there are six columns, with six different versions, these are the 'Hexaploi.' There is another ready writer engaged on the greatest of all the rolls, that is his 'Octaploi,' containing eight versions in parallel columns. It strikingly displays the godly jealousy with which the early Christians preserved the Holy Scriptures in their integrity, that high as Origen's fame stood throughout Christendom, he was obliged to affix particular marks to every word which he either omitted from the existing sacred text or added to it, in order to leave his correction to the general judgment of the Church. So deep and general was the awe of incurring the woes denounced, at the close of the Revelation, against any who should presume to add to, or take away from the words of the Inspired Book (Rev. xxii. 18, 19).

When Caracalla's frantic persecution drove Origen from Alexandria, he visited Rome, whence he travelled through Greece, Palestine, and Arabia, to Antioch, where his lectures so deeply moved the Empress Mother Julia Mamæa, that she induced her son Alexander Severus to treat the Christians with toleration; also to place in his palace a bust of the SAVIOUR, and beneath it to inscribe in letters of gold His words—'All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.' Thus was fulfilled Origen's favourite saying, 'The Christian is of more use to the State than a powerful army.' The bishops everywhere

urged him to preach, and when over-persuaded, for his humility always kept him back, he, under a solemn sense of responsibility, always retired to his chamber and on his knees prayed aloud, 'O Lord, help me ! let me not preach to their ears alone, but let thy Holy Spirit preach to their hearts !' Demetrius, the bishop of Alexandria, interposed, and sternly forbade his entering a pulpit whilst still but a lay catechist ; and when the bishops of Jerusalem and Antioch ordained him, Demetrius, and Fabianus the bishop of Rome, condemned him for contumacy in daring to receive foreign ordination, deprived him of his office, and excommunicated him !

Dr. Baur's researches have rendered very doubtful the story of Origen's having rendered himself incapable of receiving ordination by his mistaken application of Matt. xix. 21 ; and his own letter to Fabianus explains that the fantastic notions which he threw out in his 'Principles' were not decisions, but philosophic problems, and that they were published against his will. So Jerome's reason for the persecution of those arrogant bishops, 'because they could not bear the glory of his science and eloquence,' seems too well-founded. But under the protection of the Eastern bishops, Origen visited city after city, preaching and lecturing, consulting libraries and searching for manuscripts. At Jericho he found in a cask an ancient version of some of the books of the Old Testament of extraordinary rarity and value. His refutation of Celsus, the Pagan Voltaire, exposed him to the cruel persecution of Ancient Romanism ; but amidst tortures, carefully graduated so as to prolong his life in suffering, neither by words or gesture did 'the Adamantine' betray impatience of his cross ; and he peacefully entered into his rest at Tyre in his seventieth year. Origen was not tall, but had a frame of colossal strength, and his appearance was highly attractive, beaming as his face is said

to have been with kindness, and that majesty which comes from sanctity of mind combined with intelligence.

Signal, however, as were the triumphs of Clement and Origen over the New Platonists, they unhappily adopted the Platonic view of 'the Sage as elevated above the simple believer, not merely by higher perceptions but by the higher virtue of a perfectly passionless existence, called *Apathy*; by which being made like to God, and united to Him, the Sage is free from all need of earthly enjoyments.' They also adopted the Platonic notion, that 'the body must be mortified by coarse and slender fare, frequent fastings and watchings, and by protracted absence from all society of mankind, in order that the mind being absorbed in contemplation may be detached as much as possible from the body.' It is easy to see the fascinations of this system for the deep-thinking students of those times; and even before the Christian *Æra*, all Egypt, and especially its chief seat of learning, Alexandria, abounded with learned Jews and pagans, who thus sought to attain 'high virtue;' and were called *Ascetics*, from their self-mortifying *exercises*. But it is strange that Christian teachers should cultivate a solitary mode of life, so contrary to the example of the SAVIOUR and of His Apostles, who 'went about doing good;' and retired to seclusion only when public duties ceased to demand their presence. How singular also, is their overlooking St. Paul's express condemnation of such 'bodily *exercise*,' and the 'shew of wisdom in will-worship, and neglecting, or punishing, the body!' (Col. ii. 23).

Strong indeed must have been their prejudices in favour of Platonic philosophy when they could fancy that our Lord and His Apostles taught a twofold Gospel, and recognised an upper and under class in the Church, a plebeian and a patrician order; so that while the Christian commonalty might be left to wallow in the affairs and duties of everyday life, the

Eclectic class stood on a platform, high lifted above the grossness of earthly engagements and earthly passions; in their own esteem, and that of others, immensely more holy, and higher in rank, as candidates for the honours of the future life, than the common crowd of believers! Then the inability of this unscriptural system to impart genuine holiness is thus touchingly confessed by the famous Alexandrian Jew Philo, for man carries his inward enemy into solitude with him, and cannot flee from the world in his own breast:—‘Often,’ says he, ‘I left kindred, friends, and country, and retired into the wilderness, that I might raise my thoughts to worthy contemplations; but I accomplished nothing so; my thoughts either scattered abroad, or, wounded by some impure impression, fell into the opposite current. But sometimes I find myself alone with my soul in the midst of thousands, when God dispels the tumult from my breast; and so He teaches me that it is not change of place that brings evil or good, but all depends on that God who steers the ship of the soul in whatever direction He pleases.’ It could not be otherwise, for selfishness, such as cannot co-exist with Divine love, a cold, callous, deliberate selfishness, stamps this sacrifice of all the claims and enjoyments of society and of domestic life, for *personal* advantage, as the sovereign object of all-engrossing care. Such meditative insulation as this ‘high virtue’ requires must make its votary a disjoined particle, frozen deep into the mass of his own selfishness, and thus imbedded below every touch of human sympathy.

Celibacy generally formed a part of this spurious system of self-devotion, from the impracticability of uniting the pleasures of seclusion, and of lazy meditation, with the duties and burdens of domestic life. The alternative was unavoidable, either to renounce the happiness and the cares of a husband and father, or the luxuries of supine contemplation and the

high self-conceit of surpassing holiness. Hence we early find the aspirants for 'high virtue' in Alexandria slighting marriage as only suited for those submitting to remain in 'low virtue;' forgetting that God Himself celebrated the first marriage in Paradise; that He gave to our first parents the command, 'Increase and multiply' *before* the Fall; that the two passages of the New Testament which recommend celibacy, clearly limit its duty to peculiar cases, and on special emergencies; and not on the ground of superior sanctity; and also that 'forbidding to marry,' is a characteristic of the agents of the Great Apostasy! (1 Tim. iv. 8).

But Clement took the alarm when he saw that peculiarly Christian institution which civilizes man and exalts woman, which develops and enforces all the duties and sympathies of Christians engaged in common life—the *Christian Family*—in danger of destruction. He was shocked when he found the current of public opinion threatening to sweep away the model family of every Christian Church, that of its Minister; and with it the plain and practical religion of love and sobriety, mutual forbearance and self-control, fit for the use of husband and wife, of parent and child, of master and servant, in the palace or the cottage, and for what?—an idle and delicious dream of visionary excitement. He boldly lifted his voice, and reminded the Christians of Alexandria, that many kinds of pagan worship required celibacy and ascetic abstinence in their priests, so that this new system had not even the recommendation of novelty. He adds, 'Paul declares the kingdom of heaven consists not in meat and drink, neither therefore in abstaining from wine and flesh; but in righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. As humility is shown not by castigation of the body but by gentleness of disposition; so also abstinence is a virtue of the soul, consisting not in that which is without



but that which is within the man, such as to despise money and to tame the tongue. . . . As food does not advantage us in God's sight; so neither does the married or unmarried life without knowledge, but virtuous actions done according to God's plan. So earthly property should not be cast away, but turned like a staff to proper account, by those who know how to use it rightly. . . . So it is not in the solitary life one shows himself a *man*; but he gets the victory over other men, who as a husband and father of a family, withstands all the temptations that assail him in providing for wife and children, servants and substance, without allowing himself to be turned from the love of God. The man with no family escapes many temptations; but as he has none save *himself* to care for, he is of less worth than the man who has more to disturb him, it is true, in the work of his own salvation, but who accomplishes more in social life; and who in truth presents in his own case a miniature of Providence itself. . . . The Christian mother is the glory of her children, the wife of her husband; both are the glory of the wife, and God is the glory of them all.'

Clement enforces his argument by appealing to the cases of all the married Apostles, amongst whom he enumerates St. Peter, and the Lord's brethren, who travelled as missionaries and took their wives with them; and he adds that St. Paul himself was married but took not his wife on his journeys to spare expense to the Churches. (1 Cor. ix. 5; Phil. iv. 8.) But Clement's voice was drowned in the acclamations which all Egypt now raised in honour of Antony, the first Christian who, on principle, embraced and held fast the hermit-life.

ANTONY was an illiterate youth of the lower parts of Thebais, who distributed all his goods among the poor; deserted his orphan sister and native home; and executed his ascetic vows with original and intrepid fanaticism. After

a long and painful noviciate among the tombs, and in a ruined tower, he boldly advanced into the desert three days' journey to the eastward of the Nile; discovered a lonely spot which possessed the advantages of shade and water; and fixed his last abode on Mount Colzim, near the Dead Sea; where curiosity and the fame of the miraculous cures said to have been performed by his prayers, collected around him multitudes of devotees, who built cells near his hermitage, and thus imperceptibly formed the first professing Christian monastery. Persecution had often, before this, obliged Christians to fly from the face of man, and, in some dead and voiceless wilderness, to take shelter in a rock-hewn cave, and sustain life upon wild roots and berries, and the water of some purling brook, until the calamity was overpast. Then, mindful of the SAVIOUR'S desire for His people's active, but godly, intercourse with society, 'I pray not that Thou shouldest take them *out* of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil;' they always returned to the haunts of men and to their suspended duties. But the very names assumed by the followers of Antony, *monk*, *hermit*, *anchoret*, betokened their determined rejection of society, for all were Greek words signifying solitude. His female followers equally indicated their resolution to reject the Apostolic rule of married life (1 Tim. v. 14); and to abandon the pleasures of the domestic circle—'not because they were sweet,' says the monkish annalist Sulpitius, 'but because conjoined with bitter cares,'—by calling themselves *Nuns*, the Egyptian word for Virgin. The mode by which their scruples of conscience were satisfied; and their self-righteous aspirations to 'high virtue' were strengthened, clearly shows its subtle Alexandrian philosophy.

The Church, that is *the collective body of true believers in Christ*, is called in the Holy Scriptures His Spouse; but the

Ascetics wrested that glorious title from all Christians who continued in 'low virtue,' and appropriated the honour to those who had taken the vow of celibacy, calling them, and them only, '*the brides of Christ!*' By a similar perversion of plain Scripture, while rejecting the fathers, mothers, and children, whom God had given them, they pretended to realise all those natural ties in *spiritual* relationship. Forgetting the injunction of our SAVIOUR, evidently spoken in reference to religious teachers, 'Call no man your *father* upon earth; for one is your Father, which is in heaven' (Matt. xxiii. 9), the monks called their ruler Abbot, or Father; and the same title was assumed by each of themselves in relation to the people of 'low virtue.'

After describing the austerities of an Egyptian monastery, Sulpitius asked a Gallic monk in after days, 'How would you like a bunch of herbs and half a barley-cake as a dinner for five men?' 'You are at your old tricks,' answered his friend, reddening a little, 'for you neglect no opportunity that occurs to tax us with gluttony. It is cruelty in you to require us Gauls to live in the manner of *angels*. But let that Egyptian monk content himself with such a dinner, since it is his necessity or nature to go hungry.' Equally light with their fare was the dress of Antony and his monks—a long linen tunic or a sheepskin; their furniture, a little bundle of papyrus-reed, which served as a pillow by night and a seat by day; and their employment weaving mats or baskets of palm-leaves. Self-torture being the main object for which they lived—even the indulgence of sleep was a sin, and one hour's unbroken slumber was all that was permitted to them at night; at the expiration of which they were summoned to prayer by the sound of a horn, twelve psalms were sung; and on certain occasions lessons were read out of the Old or New Testa-

ment, during which the assembly preserved a profound silence, nothing being heard but the voice of the chanter or reader. No one dared even to look at one another. The tears of the audience alone, if he spoke of sin ; or if of bliss, a gentle murmur of hope, was the only sound permitted to break the stillness of the auditory. At the close of each psalm, the whole assembly prostrated itself in mute adoration. Then retiring to the solemn silence of their cells, all betook themselves to meditate on truths which being thus severed from the realities of daily life, formed rather the visionary furniture of a theatre of celestial machinery, than the exciting causes of simple faith, hope and love. The Divine glories, the brightness of the future life, the history and advocacy of the SAVIOUR, the agency of angels and of devils, became little less than incentives to intellectual intoxication and mere mysticism, leading to no act, but only floating in the fancy. They wanted to forget every earthly tie, but Nature claimed her rights, and the feelings and sympathies which God Himself implanted in their breasts rose in antagonism to their presumptuous efforts to crush them as temptations. Moreover, Neander observes, as the lower impulses and energies of nature are excited to greater activity the less they are employed, so instead of purity and simplicity the monks were ever engaged in fierce conflict with sense. Then the quiescence in which they passed the day awoke to almost preternatural vividness visions of earth or of heaven in the hours of the night, when the effulgent magnificence of their skies kindled their imagination to absolute frenzy, and enhanced meditation to ecstasy or to horror, during the period which we give to repose. The return of the day only confirmed in them the illusions of the night, for as the gay and multiform beauties of charming scenery (when seconded by favouring circumstances), generate the

soul of poetry ; so (with similar aids) the habit of mystic musing—in total vacuity of rational thought—was cherished in these monks by the aspect before their eyes each day of the enormous piles of the naked mountain Colzim, and the dead solitude of sand around them, traversed but not enlivened by the Nile. Hence the life of Antony, according to Gieseler, falsely ascribed to Athanasius, teems with the trials and temptations, the agonies felt and described by this first hermit as *personal* conflicts with hosts of impure, malignant, and furious fiends, in which his over-excited imagination and shattered nerves often gave way in a long swooning fit, which his followers believed to be a miraculous trance, in which his spirit was caught up into heaven. His agitated and exhausted spirit believed them ; fancied these visionary scenes to be realities ; that they were miraculously vouchsafed to him ; that he was inspired with a new Revelation, and that his prayers could effect miracles !

Subject to such a course of life, the wisest of ourselves might soon come so under the influence of a fantastic imagination as to have their sleep hurried with strange visions, and their waking meditations quickened by unearthly voices ; and might complacently report such fancies as celestial favours and as real miracles to greedy hearers, without a particle of dishonest consciousness. Thus the fame of Antony and his miracles quickly filled all Egypt from the Cataracts to the Delta, and fresh aspirants to ‘high virtue’ so rapidly joined his ranks that he was often obliged to retire, for the sake of the solitude which he courted, to some far-off retreat ; where a new swarm of followers quickly settled around him. Antony lived to the patriarchal age of one hundred and five years. and when, on most important occasions, he visited Alexandria his presence always produced a profound sensa-

tion, especially as his voice was then raised in behalf of the truth. In his later days his views seem to have undergone a salutary change. He often thus remonstrated with those who besought him to exercise his miraculous powers for their benefit—‘To do wonders is not our work, but the SAVIOUR’S, and it is of comparatively little value to the agent. For this reason, He said to His disciples, “Rejoice not that the spirits are subject to you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven”’ (Luke, x. 20).

He also in his last years often warned his followers against those visionary conflicts with the spirits of darkness which had made his own previous existence such a burden, and had often driven him to the verge of derangement; and his words so completely confute the austere and gloomy spirit of Monachism that I must give them here:—

‘Let us not,’ he said, ‘busy our imaginations in painting spectres of evil spirits; let us not be troubled as if we were lost. Let us rather rejoice as the redeemed of the Lord, and let us remember that the Lord is with us, who has conquered them, so they cannot harm us. According to our different moods of mind evil spirits act; if we are cowardly, they exhibit their most frightful images; if we rejoice in the Lord, reflecting that everything is in His hand, and that we are safe in Him, these foul spirits retire in confusion, knowing that then we shall be more than conquerors through Him that loved us.’

It was the Egyptian custom to embalm the bodies of their great men and of those highly-beloved, to take the mummies into their houses and place them on small couches. But Antony, foreboding the idolatrous tendency of Monachism, and fearing that his relics might yet be worshipped, with his last breath charged his friends to bury his body and keep

the grave concealed. Alas! how soon his forebodings were fulfilled!

But the immediate result of Monachism should have shown its utter antagonism to the Gospel, even to its mistaken, though well-meaning, founder. For while hundreds of the Egyptian Christians were fatally infatuated by this enthusiastic pursuit of 'high virtue,' thousands and tens of thousands of those contented to live in 'low virtue,' satisfied their consciences by admiring the Ascetics and asking their intercessions, themselves plunging into the worst abominations of the pagans around them.

Carthage was also, during the beginning and middle of the third century, the scene of an extraordinary movement produced and carried out by two of the most gifted of the Christian Apologists, the famous Tertullian and Cyprian. The history of Carthage presents a very striking resemblance to that of Rome. Both sought, gained, and lost the empire of the world; both were compensated by spiritual splendour for the loss of temporal glory; both were rivals in each condition, but with this singular difference, that Carthage avenged her temporal ruin by imposing her own spiritual yoke on the neck of her haughty conqueror; and that, too, strange to say, by means of the Latin language, which had been imposed upon her as the badge of slavery, and which her Christian orators, Tertullian, and Cyprian, and Augustine, used with a power and skill which has never been even approached by those of Rome.

TERTULLIAN's extant writings amaze us by their richness of illustration from philosophy, poetry, history, medicine, and above all, from Roman law, which had been his profession before his conversion. His earlier works are so highly condensed in matter that they are obscure, but often cast out such strange gleams of genius as remind us rather of those reflected

from the dusky marble of his native Africa, than of those sparkling from that supplied to the Grecian sculptor from his lustrous Parian quarries. He displays also a muscular vigour of style of so coarse a mould as to remind us more of the statue of the flayed Bartholomew than of the torso of Hercules ; but we are sometimes electrified by the inexpressible, almost heavenly sweetness of a smile, suddenly relaxing into playful wreaths a fixed and gloomy countenance. For instance. After very ingeniously arguing that the soul of Adam was like a seed, in which all the souls of his *natural* offspring are contained, so that ever since his fall each of his children has, by 'traduction,' or transmission, inherited a sinful nature ; he laments over our ruined humanity in tones of genuine anguish. But, with an electric suddenness and brightness, he concludes, 'O CHRIST! to heal me, Thou wast wounded ; and Thou diedst to give me immortality.' Again, after some severe strictures upon female vanity, he breaks into this magnificent description of the blessed privileges enjoyed by those who 'marry in the LORD,'—'What an union is that between two believers, having in common one hope, one desire, one order of life, one service of the Lord ! Both undivided in spirit or body, like brother and sister, nay, in the true sense, twain in one flesh, kneel, pray, and fast together, mutually teach, exhort, and bear with each other ; they are not separated in the church and at the Lord's Supper ; they share each other's troubles, persecutions, joys ; neither has anything to hide from the other ; neither avoids the other ; there is free liberty to visit the sick, to sustain the needy ; the harmony of psalms and hymns goes up between them, and each vies with the other in singing the praise of their God. CHRIST rejoices to behold and hear them, and gives them His peace. Where two are *thus* met together, there He is also ; and where He is, the spirit of evil cannot enter.'



Tertullian was converted and ordained a presbyter late in life ; and his previous legal profession appears to have decided him in applying to Christianity the Roman law of '*prescription*,' which made property inalienable if enjoyed about thirty years. Hence his vehement and successful advocacy of the dangerous principle, that the *antiquity* of a doctrine or of a custom should be the test of its truth and excellence ; for Holy Scriptures show us continually God's truth simultaneously, though surreptitiously, met by Satan's lie. The tares were sown as soon as the wheat ; and St. Paul complained that 'the mystery of iniquity was already working' in his own day. But he had noble views of religious liberty, and used to say :—'Man is nobody's but God's. It is the right of man, and in the natural power of every one, to worship what he thinks ought to be worshipped. There is nothing of religion in religious constraint ; for religion must be adopted freely, not by force.' He was a voluminous writer, and his '*Apologies*' for Christianity against Jews, Pagans, and heretics not only exhibit extraordinary powers of reasoning, of sarcasm, and of persuasion, but abound in vivid and life-like pictures of the customs, manners, and even dress of the Christians of the second and early part of the third centuries, of which I shall soon avail myself. His visit to Rome, at the beginning of the third century, enabled him to observe with his own eyes the pomps and vanities which disgusted him with the world ; and Jerome tells us, that he was driven into the narrow circle of the Montanist Separatists 'by the envy and calumny of the Roman clergy, who have ever envied great talent, possessing none themselves.'

Carthage had risen to great opulence after it had been rebuilt, near the 'accursed' ruins of Rome's utterly destroyed rival. It enjoyed great privileges as the first planted of all

the Roman colonies ; and, though no longer free, its ships were found in every sea, and its merchant princes had surrounded the city on every side with beautiful villas, buried in lovely gardens and extensive parks. In one of those charming villas, remarkable for its luxury, its groves full of pagan idols, and boasting a superb statue of the favourite Carthaginian goddess, 'The Queen of Heaven,' lived the celebrated CYPRIAN, a man of high rank, fortune, and genius, who shone pre-eminent in the city, even more by the brilliancy of his lectures in oratory and philosophy, than by the splendour of his attire, and the magnificence of his banquets. He was far advanced in life at his conversion to Christianity, but entered on his new career with all the freshness of youth ; and for his fine taste the dusky splendour of Tertullian had irresistible fascination. Every day, on assuming his philosopher's cloak and setting himself to study, his first words to his secretary were, 'Give me the Master.' His generosity in surrendering all his wealth for the use of the Christians, and his powerful advocacy of their faith, endeared him to them so much, that on the death of their bishop, only a few months after Cyprian's conversion, they elected him bishop ; and overcame his objections by loud cries of 'Cyprian or no one !' But a party of presbyters, who had the independence of the Church at heart, opposed him. 'The bishops,' said they, 'are only the first amongst equal presbyters. Now, do we not know the domineering spirit of this Cyprian ? He will make everything bend to his will.' Cyprian encountered them with all the arts of the true African, and the dogmatic intolerance of the popular philosopher. In this controversy his grand aim was to exalt to the loftiest height his Episcopal authority ; and the rhetorical artifice and vehement eloquence with which he strained every available argument of philo-

sophy, and every shadow of Scriptural support, silenced, if they did not convince, his adversaries.

Several causes promoted the growth of the Episcopal authority in the early Church, and predisposed the Church of Carthage to accept Cyprian's extreme views. The chief was, undoubtedly, its utility in effecting union, order, and the preservation of Gospel truth. For if we find even the Apostles Paul, Peter, and Jude groaning over the corruptions and divisions raised in the Church, by 'perverse disputations of men of corrupt minds, destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness;'—'by false teachers privily bringing in damnable heresies, even denying the LORD that bought them;'—'by dreamers, defiling the flesh, despising dominion, speaking evil of dignities;'—how can we wonder at the long black list which Mosheim presents to us of the 'heresies' which appeared in the Church during the three first centuries. It is, then, precisely the Christian writers who contended against heresy that were the most vehement in exalting Episcopacy as their chief barrier against its mischievous encroachments. In the heat of the controversy they forgot that the Apostolic mode of opposing heretics was, at least, fourfold:—the exposure of their false doctrines—the exclusion of the incorrigible from the community—the exhibition of *all* human teachers as mere instruments or labourers in the harvest-field—and, above all, the exaltation of the SAVIOUR as the HEAD of the Church, in spiritual union with whom His true people *must* necessarily be united to each other in sympathy and love as members of His body (2 Tim. ii. 25, *seq.*; Rom. xvi. 17; 1 Cor. iii. 7; Ephes. iv. 15, 16).

Hence, as Neander profoundly observes, 'they fell into the awful mistake of confusing the invisible and visible

Church, and resting in outward and visible unity; though the unity of the Church should be first inward and spiritual, and then outward and visible; though the Church should form itself outwardly from within, as it is a community of believers in Christ, and the faith which unites them to Him is an inward and invisible fact.' So Ignatius of Antioch, in his earnest exhortation 'to obey the bishops,' is the first to coin for the Church the new and afterwards much-abused title of *Catholic*, or universal, as contrasted with the sectarians in their one-sided views, and fragmentary parties. But Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons in Gaul, at the close of the second century, in his 'Refutation of all Heresies,' was the first who directly advocated this unscriptural fusion of the invisible and visible Church by his famous saying, 'Where the Church is, there is the Spirit of God; where the Spirit of God is, there is the Church.' He also complains bitterly of such as, 'from frivolous causes, divided, and, as far as they could, destroyed the great and glorious body of Christ.'

Cyprian went much farther, and in his book on 'Unity,' by a very ingenious and subtle blending of the visible and invisible Church, he reduced the schismatics in Carthage to silence. He begins by justly observing that all the Apostles had received from the LORD the same dignity and power as Peter; but in one passage he insists that Peter obtained them in an especial degree 'as the *representative man* of Church Union, to show the whole development of the Church and ministry was to radiate from one point, and exhibiting the unity of the Church, in the unity of Episcopal power.' He then boldly asserts the severe and inviolable unity of the invisible Church to be an integral part of Christianity, and the rigid discipline enforced by the Episcopal authority to be the only means of maintaining that unity. By him the pale which enclosed the

Church from the rest of mankind was drawn with the most relentless precision ; it was the ark, and all without it were left to perish in the unsparing deluge ; heretical discord or schismatical disobedience was a deadly sin, which caused the transgressor to forfeit even the crown of martyrdom. The schismatic might bear the flames with all a true martyr's faith ; he might submit to be torn to pieces by wild beasts—this was but the just punishment for his treason to the Church—there could be no martyr without the Church !

Granting this, it would not follow that such individual representatives of the Church *must* exist in every age, still less in the Roman Church ; for, as we have seen, Peter was *not* its founder, nor in any special sense its presiding officer ; but as Cyprian, in one of his letters to Cornelius, Bishop of Rome, calls that Church 'the Chair of Peter,' it was easy to apply all that he had said of the Apostle Peter as representative of Church unity to this 'Chair of Peter.' Neander, however, proves that this was utterly to *mistake* Cyprian's meaning ; for he was not labouring to exalt the Roman Church at all over the other Churches, but to prove the entire Episcopate to be *one*—the Chair of Peter—and to renounce obedience to the bishops is the same as to attack the Chair of Peter ; and he could not be ignorant that our LORD expressly prohibited such supremacy of one Apostle over his brethren (Luke, xxii. 26).

Certainly this view harmonizes with his 'master' Tertulian's teaching, who, though admitting the common rumour that Peter and Paul had founded the Roman Church, and given it a bishop, yet he never calls it the 'Chair of Peter,' and he refers the words 'Thou art Peter' *not* to the Bishop of Rome, but 'to Peter *personally*, as to a man enlightened by Divine grace, and through him, to all who have recog-

Christ as their Head, and who are become, in the true

sense, rocks, that is to say, real Christians.' It is also fortified by Cyprian's own subsequent refusal to the Roman Bishop Stephen of the right of determining some matters of Church controversy, with the memorable words—'No one should make himself a bishop of bishops. . . . Whence is that Roman tradition? Is it derived from the words of our LORD, and from the authority of the Gospels, or from the instructions and the letters of the Apostles? Custom, which has crept in among some unawares, ought not to hinder the truth from prevailing; for custom without truth is only inveterate error. . . . It is no more beneath the dignity of a Roman bishop than of any other man, to suffer himself to be corrected when he is in the wrong; for the bishop ought not only to teach, but to learn; for he becomes even the better teacher who is daily adding to his knowledge, and making progress by the correction of his errors. These things I say in virtue of our *equal* dignity.' Those are noble words. They remind us of the beautiful trait in the portraiture of the good 'Clerk of Oxenforde,' traced by the Father of English Poetry—

'And gladly wolde he learn, and gladly teche.'

But Cyprian's elevation of the Episcopate cost the bishops dear, for the terrible persecution of the Emperor Decius was specially levelled at them; several fell; and the infuriated cry raised by the pagan rabble in the Amphitheatre of Carthage, 'Cyprian to the lions!' drove himself to an obscure retreat.

Cyprian's adversity had, doubtless, a subduing influence on his lofty views of his office, for we afterwards find him humbly submitting his opinions to the judgment of his 'fellow-elders,' and conceding to the people the right of choosing

worthy bishops, or of rejecting unworthy ones, according to the custom of the third century. I cannot refrain from giving my kind reader a passage from his consolatory address to the persecuted Christians of Carthage, as a compensation for his abstract argument:—‘ We ought not to mourn for those who are delivered from the world by the call of the Lord, since we know that they are not lost, but sent before us ; that they have taken their leave of us in order to precede us. We may long after them, as we do for those who have sailed on a distant voyage, but not lament them. We may not here below put on dark robes of mourning, when they above have already put on their white robes of glory. We may not give the heathen any just occasion to accuse us of weeping for them as lost and extinct, of whom we say that they live with God ; and of failing to prove by the witness of our hearts the faith which we confess with our lips. We who live in hope, who believe in God, and trust that Christ has suffered for us and risen again ; we who abide in Christ, who through Him and in Him rise again—why do we not ourselves wish to depart out of this world ; or why do we lament for the friends who have been separated from us, as if they were lost, when Christ our Lord and God exhorts us, saying, “ I am the resurrection and the life ; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live ” ? Why are we not in haste to see our country and home above, to greet our Elders ? There await us a multitude of those whom we love, fathers, brothers, children. . . . What mutual joy to them and to us, when we come into their presence and into their embrace !’

Cyprian’s noble constancy in his martyrdom gave immense weight to his theory of Church government, notwithstanding his evident retraction of its most objectionable and salient points. Let us now proceed to see how it came to pass,

that this African was the true father of Modern Romanism ; Carthage its true birth-place ; the Decian persecution its true epoch ; and a mere illustration, or rhetorical figure, turned into stern reality, its true foundation.

The Gospel was, as we observed, planted in Rome, long before St. Paul's visit, by some of those Greek 'strangers' who had been converted at Jerusalem on the famous day of Pentecost. Hence the Roman Christians for ages continued a Greek colony, having little interest and less intercourse with the people of the cruel city, in which they sojourned as perfectly 'strangers' as their forefathers had been. Their language was Greek ; their Scriptures Greek ; their Liturgy Greek ; their writers Greek ; and through Greek they kept up constant communication with all the other Churches on the identical Greek model of a great Republic, giving all the States in union the right of self-government. Their faith was so emphatically the pure faith of the Gospel, that St. Paul describes it as 'spoken of throughout the whole world' (Rom. i. 8). This most unexpectedly appeared when those vast *Catacombs*, that stretch in every direction under the city, were re-opened in the sixteenth century, after having been shut up and forgotten above a thousand years. Originally excavated by the workers of pozzolana, for the erection of the city, they offered a natural refuge from persecution both for living Christians and for dead.

Jerome thus vividly describes those singular retreats :—  
'When I was at Rome, still a youth and employed in literary labour, I was accustomed, in company with others of my own age, and actuated by the same feelings, to visit on Sundays the sepulchres of the martyrs ; and often to go down into the crypts dug into the heart of the earth, where the walls on either side are lined with the dead ; and so intense is the darkness, that we almost realize the words of the prophet,



"We go down alive into Hades;" and here and there a scanty aperture, ill-deserving the name of window, admits scarcely light enough to mitigate the gloom which reigns below; and as we advance through the shades with cautious steps, we are forcibly reminded of the words of Virgil, "Horror on all sides; even the silence terrifies the mind."

These Catacombs are still the favourite resort of the Christian traveller. In a small plot of ground on the open Campagna, about two miles from the city, and close by the Chiesa S. Agnese, is a quarry-like excavation into which several steep steps lead down to a rough wooden door. A dark-visaged sacristan hands each visitor a lighted torch, and applies his ponderous key to the lock, a low passage cut out in the solid rock appears, only wide enough to allow walking in single file. As soon as the eye is able to distinguish objects, long narrow galleries are seen stretching in every direction; of which the sides are excavated, so as to present an appearance of a tier of cells ranging one above the other in sizes fitted to the body, and closed afterwards with brick-work and mortar. Within these the bodies lay, wrapped either in folds of linen and covered with perfumes, or dressed in their richest robes, a vase to hold either the blood of a martyr, or, as Gieseler conjectures, some of the wine used in the Lord's Supper on his commemoration-day, embedded in mortar at the side—leaves of evergreen laurel, or ivy (not cypress) strewed under them; the instruments of martyrdom (if they died martyrs) entombed with them, such as nails, forceps, leaden bullets, axe, or cross; or perhaps the instruments of their respective trades; for it is a touching fact, that out of the vast mass of epitaphs, but two or three exhibit the proud array of *prænomen*, *nomen*, and *cognomen*, which distinguished Roman nobles; so that it is probable the Christians of Rome were then generally of the lower class.

Each tomb was closed in by a slab of marble, bearing a rudely painted or cut Greek inscription in letters from half-an-inch to four inches long.

Many of those monumental marbles have been removed to the Lapidarian Gallery in the Vatican, and amidst their multitude of epitaphs, not a murmur, a boast, or an appeal to revengeful passions are seen; all breathe softness, benevolence, and forgiveness; faith, hope, and charity. Here are no prayers for the forgiveness of the dead, no prayers to the Virgin or saints. The name of CHRIST is repeated in an endless variety of forms, so as to invest Him alone with all the honours of a Redeemer. On most may be seen an olive branch, and the words of sure comfort, 'Peace in Christ.' The pagan epitaphs at Rome imprecate frightful curses upon the violators of their graves, or breathe out such a rebellious spirit against heaven as this, 'I, Procope, lift up my hands against God, who snatched me away innocent. She lived 20 years.' How different is that inscription on a Christian tomb, though carved so irregularly as to seem broken by sobs—'The Lord gave . . . the Lord hath taken away . . . blessed be the name of the Lord!' Heavenly hopes gild most of the tombs of the Catacombs with such bright words as these:—'In Christ. Alexander is not dead, but lives above the stars; and his body rests in this tomb.'—'Aselus sleeps in Christ.'—'To Julia, my sweetest wife, who lived 45 years, and with me 21. Happy in peace.'—'Here in peace rests Laurentia, who believed in the resurrection.'—'Victrix, victorious in Christ; in peace and in Christ.'—'Clementia, tortured, dead, sleeps, will rise.'—'In the time of Hadrian, Marius, a young centurion, who lived long enough, since he gave up his life with his blood for Christ; at length here rests in peace.'—'Once the happy daughter of the presbyter Gabinus, here lies Susanna, united with her father in peace.'—'Petro-

nia, a deacon's wife, the model of modesty. Here I lay my bones; spare your tears, dear husband and daughters, and believe that it is forbidden to weep for one that lives in God, buried in peace.' Crowns, stars, and palm branches, appear on every side, symbols of victory over the grave; but the Cross was their favourite emblem, and its use was always joyful. It was formed by two simple crossed lines, on which was sometimes traced simply the 'monogram,' or Greek initials of Christ's name; at other times with the addition of the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, on which sat a Dove encircled by a garland of blooming flowers, telling at a glance their faith in the Divine Redeemer's sacrifice, and confidence in its securing to them the gift of the Holy Spirit, and a blissful eternity.

The Cross to the early Christians was always a cheerful and consolatory, not a depressing and melancholy sign. It was chiefly used as a pledge of CHRIST's victory and resurrection, and so it continued for several centuries. A bronze lamp was generally suspended from the arch, betokening belief in immortality. Entirely occupied with the rewards awaiting them after the trials of their troubled life, these Christians, 'strong in faith,' saw in death only a way by which they arrived at everlasting happiness, and took pleasure in enlivening it, even in these gloomy haunts, with smiling colours, or agreeable symbols; adorning it with flowers and vine leaves, and with pleasing, though inartistic, paintings of the shepherd's life, the vintage, the love-feast; or of pastoral scenes, exciting emotions of joy, innocence, and love. Rude frescoes often decorate the ceilings and sides of the vaults, all typical of some holy doctrine connected with the Christian's life or resurrection, such as the history of Jonah, the ascension of Elijah, the sacrifice of Abraham, and Moses striking the rock. Other sketches, particularly those of animals, teach

similar cheerful truths. The Church is generally represented by a ship ; the anchor denotes the firm ground of faith ; the stag implies the soul thirsting for the water-brooks of life ; the horse the rapidity with which men ought to run and embrace the doctrine of salvation ; the hare the timid Christian hunted by persecutors ; the lion prefigures strength, or appeared as the emblem of the tribe of Judah ; the fish is a Greek anagram of the SAVIOUR'S name (*Ichthus*, Jesus Christ, Son of God, the Saviour) ; the dove indicates the Christian's harmlessness and simplicity, the cock his vigour, the peacock or phoenix his resurrection. There is no attempt at representing the SAVIOUR, except by some emblem, such as the Good Shepherd, bearing on His shoulders the lost and recovered sheep ; or a figure of Orpheus with a lyre, as the civiliser of men. The Apostle Paul is represented bald, with a high nose, and wearing the gown of a Roman citizen ; Peter has a single tuft of hair on his bald forehead. Each has a *book*, the only symbol of his Apostleship. Peter has neither the sword nor the keys, inseparable with his figure in the dark ages ; John is remarkable for youthful beauty and sweetness of expression. Thus the majesty of age and its dignity are attributed to Paul and Peter, while all the grace of youth, and the exquisite gentleness of perfect love, are centered in John. It is remarkable, that the acts of martyrdom, as well as the display of our Lord's crucifixion, did not become the subjects of Christian art, till far down in the dark ages.

Their Greek origin, however, exposed the faith of the early Roman Christians to be corrupted by the subtle sophistry to which the Greek mind was excessively prone, and which was specially dangerous at Rome, where every error had, but too early, its advocate and its party ; and where Ancient Romanism had its chief stronghold, so that the chief pastor of

the Christians dared to exercise little authority ; but, in the dimness and obscurity which generally veiled them from their persecuting Emperors, he held his unmarked dwelling in the distant Transteverine suburb, or in the lowly and unfrequented Vatican. The basest court sycophant, buffoon or gladiator attracted more attention in the streets than the Roman bishop, except when his life was sought by some politic or fanatic Emperor. The total absence of literary genius in the Roman bishops of the three first centuries, and the fact, recorded by Sozomen, that 'neither bishop nor any one else publicly preached to the people in Rome' during that period, have left such darkness on their early history that little more, as Dean Milman's researches have clearly proved, can be produced by the eager, and, but too often, unscrupulous efforts of Romish historians to glorify them, than barren lists of their names, and transparently fabricated legends of their martyrdom. So, as soon as the obscurity which veils its early Church history begins to clear a little, we find heretics of all sorts here, face to face in fierce controversy. It was in Rome that Judaizing teachers flourished, and not in Jerusalem, where the bitter hostility of the Jews prevented Christians from adopting their usages and opinions. Here too they were most successful in their efforts to propagate that Judaizing doctrine that man's salvation mainly depends upon obedience to the law—the error which St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Romans, combats as an attempt to 'establish their own righteousness, not submitting to the righteousness of God.' (Rom. x. 3.)

But church-government had, as might be expected, most interest for the Roman bishops, practical men of business as they naturally were ; and it was a controversy which arose between the Eastern and Western Churches, in the year 196, as to the true time for keeping Easter, which first drew a

bishop of Rome, Victor, into an assertion of authority over the other Churches of Christendom, when the Emperor Severus was absent from Rome. The letter of Bishop Irenæus, rebuking Victor for his arrogance, is still extant, recommending a milder tone to him; and asserting the right of the Churches to maintain their own usages on ceremonial questions, with the remark, 'It is not right to tear asunder the bonds of Christian communion on account of festivals, knowing already from the prophets, that festivals celebrated in hatred do not please God.'

Victor and his successors, Zephyrinus and Callistus, have recently emerged into light in the curious contemporary work which the learned Bunsen has traced to the pen of Hippolytus, bishop of Portus, near Rome, whose name figures as Saint and Martyr in the Roman Calendar, and whose statue stands in the Vatican. The mischievous attempts of Greek converted philosophers to explain the Mystery of the TRINITY, had already raised two heresies, of which Rome was, as usual, the battle-field. In the graphic pages of Hippolytus, Victor stands forth as a stern, arrogant, and unlearned man, stunned and bewildered by the controversial clamour, and saved only by the brave interposition of the bishop of Portus from making shipwreck of his faith. Bishop Zephyrinus appears just as unskilful in argument, mean-spirited, venal, ever wavering between the adverse parties and governed by the crafty Callistus, whose secret history is exposed in such a manner as to give a singular picture of the Christian life of that day in Rome, with that air of minute truthfulness so valuable in history. Callistus had been slave of a rich Christian, who set him up in a bank from which he embezzled the savings of some Christian widows; was detected, fled, embarked in an outward-bound ship, was pursued, threw himself overboard, was rescued from the waves, dragged

back to Rome, and sentenced to penal servitude in the Work-house. He was released on pretext of collecting money due to him, raised a riot in a Jewish synagogue, in order to gain the credit of martyr-zeal, was publicly scourged, and transported to the mines in Sardinia, whence he escaped by the forged insertion of his name upon the list of pardoned exiles. Victor, desirous to screen the scandal caused by his infamous conduct, supported him by a small pension at Antium, whence he was recalled by bishop Zephyrinus, who placed him over the Cemetery, and gradually yielded to his crafty counsels for courting popularity, and for escaping the odium of collision with the powerful heretics. Callistus succeeded him as bishop, and but for Hippolytus' able opposition, he would have introduced and established a fatal heresy into Rome. And yet the Romanist annalists have elevated this unworthy bishop to the rank of martyrdom, seizing on the ironical application to him of that title when he was dragged by the police before the præfect of Rome, to be tried as a rioter in the Jewish synagogue!

Hippolytus is called by his contemporaries 'most sweet, most benevolent, most eloquent;' and his extant works, which were till recently attributed to Origen, indicate a wide heart for the universality of God's love in Christ to mankind, with a glowing love of religious liberty, founded generally on the free agency of man, and specifically on the true Christian, as the organ of the Holy Spirit. In place of the then generally adopted title of 'Catholic,' he calls Christians by the sweet name, 'God-lovers' (Philotheists). His style is oratorical and fanciful, like that of Origen, but also luminous. There is not a trace of modern Romanism in his works. His interpretation of the Apocalyptic Woman (Rev. xii. 1) makes her emblematic of the Church; the twelve stars the twelve Apostles, her founders; and the wondrous Child the SAVIOUR,

whom the Church continually brings forth by her preaching. He knew no title to supremacy in the bishop of Rome, but speaks of the office as of course elective; and that, though the presbyters had the primary right to vote, the people exercised their primitive right of confirming the election, either consenting by acclamation, or rejecting by a tumultuary veto. The legislation of the Roman Church was then in the hands of its forty-two presbyters and seven deacons, and the judicial power in the bishop, but his jurisdiction did not extend above one hundred miles from the capital.

During the twenty-three years which passed between the death of Hippolytus and that of Cyprian, provincial Synods had considerably raised, as Mosheim shows, the power of the bishops of the chief cities; for, as representing more important churches, they acted as presidents, were styled Metropolitans, and exercised authority over the bishops of smaller cities who had been 'of equal dignity;' and this movement, of course, raised the bishop of the capital to more commanding influence. Whilst the Decian persecution raged, the Christians of Carthage, which, by its corn trade, had more regular and more rapid intercourse with Rome than any other city of the Empire, were drawn by common sympathies and common sufferings into the closest alliance; and the clergy constantly corresponded with each other in despatches still extant, especially when the bishops of both cities had been cut off by one common martyrdom. Indeed, Fabianus was the first martyr-bishop of Rome whose death rests on certain testimony. It was then that the Roman Christians were induced by those of Carthage to use the Latin language in their public worship, and to adopt Cyprian's system of Church discipline, thoroughly suited as it was to Roman sternness and respect for law, and so flattering to the predominant national vanity, by making their favourite Apostle,



Peter, the representative of the Church, and Rome his chair.

At first, many of the Roman clergy boldly opposed this encroachment; but, as Dean Milman shows, 'their resistance was short, and subsided into a trembling deference to their bishop's imperious assertion of hierarchical despotism; and henceforth rebellion to Episcopal authority becomes as great a crime as erroneous opinion; schism as hateful as heresy.'

During the forty years which followed the Decian persecution, the Roman Emperors were generally so often absent, or reigned so short a time, that the Roman Church and its bishops were seldom molested, and their influence was greatly increased over the foreign Churches, who looked to them for the earliest intelligence of every revolution in the Empire, and of every edict which might affect them. They were in the van; the first to foresee danger, the first to suffer. On their prudence or rashness, on their resolution or weakness, on their influence or mediation, might in some degree depend the common safety. And this high distinction was of such high danger and difficulty, as to fix upon them the eyes of all Christendom.

The terrible ten years' persecution, begun by the Emperor Diocletian, aimed at extirpating Christianity, by destroying every existing copy of the Holy Scriptures; for it was at length understood, that it was labour in vain to cut off the bishops and clergy and people, so long as the Bible was left, to be the source from which true Christianity and the life of the Church was ever freshly springing, and supplying preachers continually in the place of the martyred. Some Bibles were yielded up for fear of torture and immediately consigned to the flames. But the vast majority of Christians preferred their Bibles to their lives; they branded those

who surrendered them as *Traditores* (traitors); and when summoned before the magistrates and asked, 'Have you in your house any sacred writings?'—the noble answer was ever ready, 'Such have I, but they are in my heart.' So this persecution was over-ruled to the promotion of the Gospel, by the impetus it gave to multiplying copies of the Sacred Volume, and to the more careful separation of the inspired books from the spurious forgeries which already abounded.

Throughout the whole Diocletian persecution, darkness settles again thick over the bishops of Rome. The apostasy of Marcellinus is but a late and discarded fable, adopted as favouring the Papal supremacy. It is also said that bishop Marcellus was reduced to the service of a groom. If this be true, his successor had, as we shall see, full revenge, when kings and emperors submitted to the same menial office, and held the stirrup for popes to mount their horses.

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(See Gibbon, i. 234-329; ii. 1-109. Milman, *A. C.* ii. 263, 281; iii. 383. L. C. i. 28-55. Neander, i. 262, 284, 294, 382, 435, 457; ii. 487-512. Gieseler, *E. H.* i. 185-300. Mosheim, *E. H.* i. 207-277. Bunsen, *Christianity and Mankind*, i. 225-491, v. 364. Clemens Alex. *Stromat.* i. iii. 446-449; i. iv. 333; i. vii. 741. *Pæd.* iii. 250. Maitland, *Church in the Catacombs*, *passim*. Blondel, *Les Sybilles*, p. 193. Perret, *Catac. de Rome*, *passim*. Sozomen, *H. E.* vii. 19. Hieron. *Ezek.* c. xl.)

[A.D.

## CHAPTER VII.

' Ah Constantine ; to how much ill gave birth,  
Not thy conversion, but these rich domains  
That the first wealthy pope received of thee !'

—MILTON.

### CONSTANTINE THE GREAT.

TRoubles scarcely paralleled in the history of Rome quickly followed the abdication of Diocletian ; for the long absence of the Emperors had filled the Romans with discontent and indignation. It was in vain that, a few months afterwards, his successors dedicated under his name those magnificent baths whose ruins still supply the ground as well as the materials for so many churches and convents, as a report was insensibly circulated, that the vast sums expended in erecting those elegant recesses of ease and luxury would soon be required at their hands. These suspicions were quickly realized by the rigorous inquisition set on foot by the Emperor Galerius into the property of all his subjects, for the purpose of a general taxation, both on their lands and on their persons. The privileges which had for the last five hundred years exempted the Romans from the weight of personal taxes, and cast it on the provinces, were contemptuously violated. The officers of the revenue already began to number the Roman people, and to settle the proportion of the new taxes ; taking a very minute survey of their real estate, and wherever there was

the slightest suspicion of concealment, very freely employing torture to extort a sincere declaration of their personal wealth. The rising fury of the people was encouraged by the connivance of the Senate, and the support of the Prætorian guards, who apprehended their own approaching dissolution, and declared their readiness to draw their swords in the service of their oppressed country.

MAXENTIUS, son of the Emperor Maximian, and son-in-law of Galerius, whose vices and incapacity had prevented his promotion to the rank of Cæsar, seized the opportunity to revenge his own humiliation, raised the standard of revolt in Rome, and persuaded his father to revoke his abdication and re-assume the purple. According to the advice, or rather the orders, of his colleague, the Emperor Severus immediately hastened to Rome, confident that he could easily suppress the tumult of an unwarlike populace, commanded by a feeble voluptuary. But he found on his arrival the gates of the city shut against him, the walls filled with soldiers, an experienced general, of ancient dignity and great fame in arms, at the head of the rebels, and his own troops without spirit or affection. A large body of his Moorish troops, said to have been levied by Maximian in his African campaign, deserted to the enemy, allured by the promise of a vast largess, and naturally attached to the interest of their old leader. So Severus retreated to Ravenna, leaving Maximian and Maxentius the declared Emperors of Rome; and, finally decoyed into the hands of Maximian, he was put to death.

A still heavier blow to Galerius was the escape of Constantine. This famous prince was of Imperial birth by his father Constantius, but his mother Helena was the daughter of an inn-keeper, and his obscure birth-place, Naissus near the banks of the Danube, denied him the advantages of a liberal education. His father, as we saw, purchased

his promotion to the rank of Cæsar, and the splendour of an Imperial alliance, by the divorce of his wife Helena and the repudiation of his son Constantine; who was thus, in his eighteenth year, consigned to poverty and disgrace. However, his fine figure, intelligence, dexterity in military exercises, pleasing address, and apparent indifference to the pursuit of ambition, and to the allurements of pleasure, won the favour of Diocletian, who gave him a command in his army; and in the Persian and Egyptian wars his military skill and valour raised him to the rank of a tribune of the first order. Diocletian's abdication left him to the mercy of Galerius, whose jealousy was soon awakened by the clamours of the soldiery for his promotion to the rank of Cæsar, and by the repeated letters of Constantius, requesting the presence of his now celebrated son. An absolute monarch is seldom at a loss how to execute a sure and secret revenge; and strange stories are told of Constantine's single combat with a gigantic Sarmatian; and also with a monstrous lion, to which Galerius had cruelly exposed him, by flattering appeals to his courage. From this constant peril of his life, Constantine extricated himself by his famous flight. Leaving the palace of Nicomedia at midnight, and, during the first stages, maiming the post-horses which might be employed in the pursuit, he fled with astonishing speed across Bythinia, Thrace, Dacia, Pannonia, Italy, and Gaul; and amidst the joyful acclamations of the troops, he reached Boulogne, at the very moment of his father's embarkation for Britain. When Constantius was dying at York, after his victory over the Caledonians, he named Constantine his successor; and so enthusiastic was the army in supporting his claims, that Galerius reluctantly elevated him to the rank of Cæsar. His six years' subsequent reign was remarkable for toleration towards the Christians; but his deification of his father; his medals representing

himself under the symbols of Apollo, whose unerring shafts, laurel wreath, immortal beauty, and elegant accomplishments, seemed to make him a fit patron for a youthful hero; his lavish gifts at the pagan shrines; his exposure of several captive German princes to wild beasts in the Amphitheatre of Treves; and the merciless spirit in which he crushed all the rivals who crossed his ambitious path, prove him still a true Roman in superstition and pride, in ferocity and fortitude.

Dean Milman, probably, suggests the true solution of the vexed question of the time and nature of Constantine's conversion, by pointing out three phases under which he saw and accepted Christianity;—as a *soldier*, in his death-struggle with Maxentius, under the walls of Rome; as a *statesman*, on his attaining the sole government of the Empire; and as a *sinner*, after his cruel execution of his wife and son.

But a crisis gradually arrived; for Galerius, to strengthen his position, conferred the purple upon his old and able companion in arms Licinius; and Maximian gave his daughter Fausta in marriage to Constantine, with the title of Augustus. So now, for the first and last time, six Emperors were in the field disputing the sole sovereignty of the Roman world.

Among those rivals, Constantine early displayed a decided superiority in political ability, military prowess, and the sagacious prudence which bided its time for striking a decisive blow. Maximian was the first sacrifice to ambition. Finding himself unable to obtain ascendancy over his son, who was no less intractable than himself, he quitted Rome and retired to the court of Constantine; was detected in a conspiracy against his son-in-law, by whom the only favour shown to his age, dignity, and alliance, was the permission to choose by what death he should die. Galerius was the next to perish, in the eighteenth year of his reign, of that most loathsome malady, called 'being eaten of worms.' The

visitation of God is visible in the fact, that the three proudest and most implacable persecutors of Christians that the world ever saw, Herod the Great, Galerius, and Philip II. of Spain, perished of this most agonizing and disgusting of all diseases. Galerius had raised a trophy, proudly proclaiming the extirpation of Christianity; but now that his chamber and his whole palace were infected by the insupportable stench that issued from the mass of living corruption into which his body was eaten away; now that all the nostrums of the physicians and all the oracles' suggestions only aggravated the virulence of his disease; the unfortunate Emperor issued an edict fully admitting the failure of fire and sword to exterminate Christians; permitting the free and public exercise of their worship; and imploring them to pray for his recovery. This famous edict went forth almost with the last groan of the miserable Galerius, 30th April, 311. It was respected by Constantine and Licinius; but Maximin in the East and Maxentius in Rome, avowed themselves as the champions of Ancient Romanism in all its original pomp, and more than its original power. Sacrifices to all the old idols of Rome were performed with the utmost splendour and regularity; the pontiffs were invested with power to compel the attendance of all the citizens in their dominions, and the Christians were rendered liable to every variety of punishment or torture which fire and steel, racks and scourges, iron hooks and red-hot beds, savage beasts and more savage executioners, could inflict on the human body. The plagues and famines which soon visited and desolated Rome and the East, were ere long felt to be Divine judgments upon the miserable people for their rejection of the true God; but the infamous excesses and cruelties of their pagan princes were groaned under as their heaviest calamity.

Maxentius at length so outraged the patience of the

Romans, that their ambassadors conjuring Constantine, in the name of the Senate and people, to deliver them from their detested Emperor, at length drew him from obscurity. At the head of forty thousand men, he marched against Maxentius, who commanded at least four times that force; and such was the rapidity with which he crossed Mount Cenis, that he had captured Susa before the Roman Emperor had heard of his departure from the banks of the Rhine. Before that tyrant's preparations for conflict were complete, Constantine and his 'fellow-veterans,' as he loved to call them, were thundering along the great Flaminian Road, within a few miles of Rome.

Eusebius tells us, on the authority of the Emperor himself, that as he was on this memorable march, he was in prayer; that about noon, as the day was declining, a flaming Cross appeared in the sky, with the words, '*By this, conquer;*' that in the night which followed he saw in a dream the figure of CHRIST bearing a *standard*, such as in Christian pictures is represented in the descent to the departed spirits; that, on consultation with Christian clergy in the camp, he adopted this sacred banner instead of the Roman Eagles, and professed himself a disciple of the Christian Faith. Historic doubts have been raised upon this narrative, but the probability that some such change was effected by some such means is confirmed by the fact, not only of Constantine's adoption of the Christian faith immediately afterwards, but of the specific introduction of the Cross into the army, in great measure, though not entirely, agreeing with the indications in the narrative.

We can but faintly realize the transports of joy with which the numerous Christian soldiers in Constantine's army heard the general order, that their own beloved emblem of victory and joy should glitter on their helmets, be engraved



on their shields, and interwoven on their banners. Thus that abominated instrument of torture and death only inflicted upon slaves and barbarians—that object of contempt and horror in the eyes of the philosophers and of the Romans—ceased to excite ideas of guilt, pain, and shame, and became the symbol of force, courage, and victory. Thus was the cross changed into such an object of reverence and honour, that henceforth it was destined to be borne aloft in the hands of the Emperor's statue; but thus also for the first time, at the command of a Roman Emperor—O woeful omen for the Roman Church!—the meek and peaceful Jesus became a God of battle, and the sign of His redemption a banner of bloody strife.

Constantine had apprehended that Maxentius, instead of risking a general engagement, would shut himself up within the walls of Rome, where his ample magazines and immense supply of water secured him against the danger of famine, so that he might be reduced to the sad necessity of destroying with fire and sword the Imperial City, the deliverance of which had been the cause of the civil war. But the pagan soldiers were as resolute in fighting for their own religion as the Christians for theirs, and the veterans who had so often fought and conquered under the Eagles of Maximian now rallied fiercely under those of his son. So it was with equal surprise and pleasure that, on reaching Saxa Rubra, about nine miles from Rome, he discovered the army of Maxentius drawn out in order of battle; their long front filling a very spacious plain, and their deep array reaching to the banks of the Tiber, which covered their rear, and forbade their retreat. Constantine disposed his troops with consummate skill, and chose for himself the post of honour and of danger. Distinguished by the splendour of his arms, he charged in person the cavalry of his rival; and his irresistible attack won

the day. The cavalry of Maxentius was chiefly composed either of unwieldy cuirassiers or of light Moors and Numidians. They yielded to the vigour of the Gallic horse, which possessed more activity than the one, more steadiness than the other. The defeat of the two wings left the infantry without any protection on its flanks. The Prætorian guards, animated by revenge and despair, knowing that their offences were beyond the reach of mercy, made a gallant stand; and their repeated rallies, though unable to recover the victory, obtained for them an honourable death; so it was observed that their bodies covered the same ground which had been occupied by their ranks. The confusion then became general, and the dismayed troops of Maxentius, pursued by an implacable enemy, rushed by thousands into the deep and rapid stream of the Tiber. Maxentius himself attempted to escape back into the city over the Milvian bridge; but the crowds which pressed together through that narrow passage forced him into the river, where he was immediately drowned by the weight of his armour. His body, which had sunk very deep into the mud, was found with much difficulty the next day. The sight of the tyrant's head, when it was exposed to the eyes of the Romans, filled the air with their joyful acclamations of loyalty and gratitude to Constantine as their deliverer.

The victory of the Milvian Bridge, October 28, A.D. 312, ended the age of persecution, and ended also the primitive period of Christian Church history. Amidst the frightful entanglement of men and horses in the eddies of the Tiber, the loss of life was awful. The seven-branched candlestick of the temple of Jerusalem, brought out probably by the Jewish soldiers as their standard against the Christians, was lost, it is said, on that day amidst the waves. On that day, too, was lost the simpler form of faith and of worship of the

three first centuries. From that day began the Emperor's unhappy policy for combining Christianity with Paganism as the religion of the Roman world. To understand the greatness of the change, we must glance at the panorama of the Early Christian life presented to us by Neander, who, according to Bunsen, was 'the first to give the history of the Church as the history of the Christian religion, not simply of the Ecclesiastical system.'

Indeed those who, after patient study, have entered into the depth, the tenderness, the delicacy of sentiment which pervade the whole of his vast work, fulfilling its own beautiful motto, '*It is the heart which makes the theologian,*' cannot but behold in it, as in a mirror, the venerable historian himself—his black, shaggy, overhanging eyebrows, and his strong Jewish physiognomy revealing the nation and religion to which he first belonged—working at his history day and night with insatiable ardour, to show to his unconverted countrymen, and to the self-conceited but half-learned Neologians of Germany, what Christianity really was. There he sits, surrounded by piles of MSS. and of huge old folios—original sources, most repulsive in appearance, and least likely to supply the required information, such as the fragmentary remains of long-forgotten 'Apologists,' obscure chroniclers, or poor recluses—still working on abstracted from all thought of worldly cares, of food, and dress, and money, and time; living, dying, buried, in the affections and in the arms of his devoted pupils—his vast work just completed in his exhibition of 'the Friends of God,' who preceded the great German Reformation. The simplicity of the early Christian Faith and worship and character, and also their strong antagonism to the heathen in all those respects, appear vividly in Neander's history. Their faith he triumphantly vindicates as that 'once delivered unto the saints;' and it

will soon shine forth in unclouded purity at the great Council of Nice. Their worship was simplicity itself. The Lord's Day was a day of joy, exempt from fasts, and on it as devoted to their Risen SAVIOUR, they always prayed standing, as He had raised them to heaven from the mire of earth; on the other days they knelt. At first they had no regular places of worship, and met in upper chambers for security. Wherever two or three of the faithful met together, there was the Church, 'for the living GOD requires living temples.' The Holy Scriptures were always largely read at their worship, and always in a language that could be understood; various translations were made into Latin very early, and where neither Greek nor Latin were understood, just as in the Jewish synagogues, interpreters translated for the ignorant the word read and spoken. Addresses were generally delivered by the bishop, or some presbyter, as in the Jewish synagogues, short and very simple, in plain, familiar, loving language, such as the heart suggested at the moment, containing an exposition and application of what had been read — 'a word of exhortation.' The Greeks, who were fond of rhetoric, began the regular sermon. Psalmody also passed from the synagogue into the Church; partly the Psalms of 'the sweet singer of Israel,' partly hymns of praise to GOD, and to CHRIST as GOD, which were afterwards of vast importance in proving that the early Christians believed in our SAVIOUR's Divinity. The LORD's Supper was always a *feast*; and, after the example of the Jewish Passover, it was at first united with a social meal; and both called Agape, or the love-supper; but from the ill effects attending the union, as in Corinth, they were early separated. It was thankfully enjoyed in memory of the SAVIOUR's sacrifice, which then held its own place in every heart, not only on every Lord's Day, but as the seal of every act of consecration, of mar-

riage, and at solemnities held in honour of the martyrs, always as a token of inseparable union in the Lord. There was generally a collection made for the widows and orphans, the sick and strangers, at which 'those who were wealthy and chose gave as much as they deemed fit.' Baptism was originally administered after the candidates had been long and carefully instructed in the Faith; it was concluded with the kiss of peace; and the baptized, clothed in white, were conducted into the Church, as in full enjoyment of Christian privileges. Sponsors were anciently used by the Church so early as the opening of the second century. Origen found the baptism of infants general in his circle and defended it, as the privilege of the Christian Family. The sick were baptized by sprinkling, the others generally by immersion. Marriage was celebrated by casting a veil over the bridegroom and bride, who gave each other their hands, and were blessed by the bishop, who had been previously asked for his consent that the union might be 'according to God and not according to the flesh.' As the ring was generally used to seal with, it was the symbol of equal authority given by the bridegroom to the bride.

Their ministers were originally understood to be 'teachers' or 'proclaimers' of the Gospel, and it is noteworthy that their Greek name '*Clergy*' implies their being the LORD's *inheritance*, as the body of believers was called by another Greek word *laity*, signifying that they were His chosen *people*. Then it is remarkable that of the Greek names given by the early Christians to their ministers *Episcopus*, or bishop, indicates the office of the presiding minister to be more of duty than of dignity, for it signifies an *over-seer*, while that of *Presbyter*, which was given to the second order, indicates the ripe experience and gravity required of them as that becoming the 'more aged;' and the title of

*deacon*, given to the lower order, shows of how much importance 'serving' in charitable distributions was considered by the early Christians.

Equally simple were the requisites for their worship; an elevated seat constructed for reading the Scriptures and delivering the address; a wooden table set apart for the Lord's Supper, with its plain furniture. Images and pictures were wholly and emphatically excluded. So sensitively did the early Christians shrink from the image worship of Ancient Romanism, that they reversed the relation of the beautiful and holy which formed its ideal, as if the HOLY disdained the beautiful form which had been so long allied to the unholy. The idea of the appearance of the SON OF GOD in the form of a servant—suited as it was to the oppressed Church of the three first centuries—the Christians pushed even to an extreme, and it was their universal opinion that Christ had veiled His Divine Majesty under an uncomely appearance; being, according to Isaiah's prediction, 'Without form or comeliness.' So sects confounding paganism with Christianity, and pagans themselves were the first to provide themselves with images and busts of CHRIST, and to place them beside those of Plato and Aristotle as common benefactors of mankind. Hence the Christians had hitherto shown an aversion to the Fine Arts, suspicious of this corrupting confusion of religion and art. Origen thus expressed this feeling—'In the highest sense God's temple and image are the humanity of Christ, next in all actuated by the Spirit of Christ—living images these with which no Jupiter of Phidias is worthy to be compared.' But it is interesting to know that the only Christian Apologist Rome ever produced, Minucius Felix, a lawyer of eminence, was the first of all its authors to write of the beauties of Nature not as mere æsthetic illustrations, but with touching tenderness as

objects of admiration and love. Neander says that his felicitous and dramatic representations seized from the life, replete with good sense, pervaded by a lively Christian feeling gave him an important place among the Apologists. Surely he opened up to us, by a happy application of our SAVIOUR'S invitation to *consider* 'our FATHER'S' merciful hand in clothing the lilies of the field and feeding the fowls of the air, a mine of rich natural beauties, and innocent enjoyments infinitely transcending those supplied by the noblest Grecian architects, painters, and sculptors in their Fine Arts.

The Christian School very early rose to importance, for it was the recognized means of imparting the necessary preliminary training to candidates for baptism, so it was a connecting link between the Church and the world. The Holy Scriptures were the chief study for three years, during which a presbyter generally filled the office of teacher, or 'any one taught of God, although he be one of the laity;' of such vital consequence did the early Christians consider Scriptural education. The scholars were called *Catechumens* in the first year, as under a course of training and discipline. In the second year they were *Hearers*, permitted to join in worship until the homily was ended, but then dismissed before that peculiar service of believers, the Lord's Supper, began. During the third year they were *Candidates*, and at its close there was a public examination,—not only into their education, but their moral conduct during the interval,—at which the whole congregation was present with the ministers to witness as well as judge. These schools were held everywhere from the beginning; but in all the larger cities there were also *Seminaries* in which instruction was given to candidates for the ministry, &c., in all branches of learning, both human and divine. The manner of teaching was perfectly simple, remote from the rules of the philosophers, and

all the precepts of human art. Neither was there any attempt to arrange the Christian doctrines in a scientific system, evidently from their desire to make the Holy Scriptures themselves and not the word of man the Rule of Faith, and also to give greater impetus to the study of them, by referring at every step to 'the Law and the Testimony,' and thus tracing up the streams of religious knowledge to their pure fountain-head. This universal study of the Scriptures in the early Church was, says Neander, closely connected with the consciousness of the universal Christian priesthood. (1 Pet. ii. 9.) The brief summary called the Apostles' Creed, as embodying their doctrine though not composed by them, began to be used in the third century as a test of true faith and a guide to catechists.

The Christian Family was as remarkable for simplicity in mode of life and dress. 'Other men,' says Clement of Alexandria, 'like the unreasoning animals, might live to eat, but Christians were used to eat that that they might live, following the example of the LORD, who ate from an humble dish, and reclined with His disciples on the grass, and washed their feet, girded with a towel.' And 'Both the woman and the man should come into the Church decently dressed, with no studied steps, in silence and with a mind trained to real benevolence, chaste in body, chaste in heart, fitted to pray to God. Furthermore, it is right that the woman should be veiled, save when she is at home, for this is respectable and avoids offence.' Pious mothers abounded in those early days who, like Eunice and Lois, made their children from infancy acquainted with the Holy Scriptures. Such was the pious Nonna, at the opening of the third century, who by her prayers and the silent influence of her shining life won over to Christianity her wicked husband, who became a devoted bishop for forty-five years. Their first-born son so long yearned



for was borne in her arms to the Church, a volume of the Gospels placed in his tiny hands, and there he was dedicated to the LORD. To her pious example and instruction the Church owes the illustrious bishop Gregory of Nazianzum, who compares his mother to Hannah, consecrating Samuel to the Lord; and says that her joy of faith at the Christian festivals overcame all sense of pain from her suffering body, and that death surprised her praying at the Table of the Lord. The peace and love that pervaded the Christian Family strikingly appear in the effect upon the whole Church; in the name of brother and sister by which Christians addressed each other; and in the 'kiss of peace' which was general after their worship, and which was given even to Christian strangers at the first introduction. It was also touchingly seen in their mild discipline of even gross offenders, who were not persecuted, but if penitent were divided into four classes;—those standing at the door of the Church, weeping and prostrate, asking the prayers of the congregation;—those with the unbaptized listening in the outer area of the Church to the sermon, and the reading of the Holy Scriptures;—those kneeling, in whose behalf special prayers were offered;—those present at the service, but not yet permitted to bring a gift to the LORD's Table, nor to partake the Holy Supper.

Hence Tertullian tells us that the pagans often exclaimed, 'See those Christians! how they love one another!' and adds, that their wonder may be excused because hatred is the feeling which animates themselves. He also gives a very vivid picture of the hourly dangers and vexations which encompassed the early Christian, and forced him to the shelter of isolation from the heathens around. Not only did he expose himself to the stoffs and brutality of the mob, when he refused to join in the bloody sports of the gladiators, or

declined some State dignity which devolved on him by right, or omitted to put up lights and laurels at his door in worship of the Emperor; but also when he refused to swear by the name of some heathen god; if, when a carpenter, he refused to make an image; if, when a smith, he refused to gild it; if, when a druggist, he refused to sell frankincense for a sacrifice; if, when a schoolmaster, he appointed no holidays for the festival of Saturn.

But there were two influences busily at work amongst Christians at the beginning of the fourth century, which removed some of the chief barriers between them and the heathen. Images began now to be used in religious worship by the Christians of Rome, and not in the Church, but in the family; and not on religious grounds, but from a newly-born taste for the Fine Arts. Hence images spread to the walls of Churches; and it is remarkable that at the very first of the principal Councils of the Church, held at Elvira in Spain, in the year 305, a decree was passed against the admission of images into Churches. The other heathenish custom arose so far back as the Decian persecution, when singular veneration began to be paid to the martyrs. The anniversary of their death was considered their birthday to a nobler life, and on each return of it whole communities gathered round their graves, where eulogies too like the old Roman *Nenia* were pronounced, and the Communion was celebrated in token of a continued fellowship with the champions, who were now united to Him for whom they had bled and died. Already the pagans accused the Christians of worshipping the martyrs; and refused the remains of Polycarp to the Church of Smyrna, 'lest they should abandon the CRUCIFIED, and worship the martyr.' 'We can neither,' was their reply, 'forsake that CHRIST who has suffered for the whole world of the redeemed, nor worship another. CHRIST we adore as

the Son of God ; the martyrs we love for their unconquerable love to their King, and because we wish to become their companions. . . . We gathered up his bones, which are more precious than gold or jewels, and deposited them in a suitable place ; and God will grant us to assemble there in joy and festivity, and celebrate the birthday of his martyrdom, in remembrance of our departed champion, and to exercise and arm those whom the conflict is still awaiting.'

But so prone are we to forget the grace which gives us the victory, and to deify the instrument, that this celebration of the martyrs was the very first germ of saint-worship ; and it is refreshing to find Cyprian and Tertullian attaching less value to the actions of martyrs than to the doctrines of CHRIST ; for 'it is not martyrs that make the Gospel, but the Gospel that makes martyrs.' But as the Diocletian persecution fell with the full force of the whole Roman world upon the most eminent Christians, it was felt to be a battle of life for Christianity ; and its martyrs were animated at the scaffold, or the stake, or in the amphitheatre, by the presence of multitudes, who, if they dared not applaud, could scarcely contain their admiration. Women crowded to kiss the hem of their garments, and their scattered ashes, or unburied bones, were stolen away by the devout zeal of their adherents, and already began to be treasured as incentives to faith and piety.

A wealthy old widow of Carthage named Lucilla—though checked by the bishop for superstitiously kissing fragments of human bones before taking the LORD'S Supper, as if there were more sanctification in them than in the memorials of the SAVIOUR'S death—set the fashion of relic-worship to the ladies of Carthage and Rome. Already the Christians of the latter city began to boast loudly of possessing the tombs and the relics of the Apostles Peter and Paul, even before the defeat of the pagans at Saxa Rubra.

Constantine, immediately after his public entry into Rome, entered on his new policy of strengthening the feeble pagan constitution of the Empire by amalgamating it with the force and freshness of his newly-adopted and victorious Christianity. The Senate had enthusiastically decreed him the first rank amongst the three *Augusti* who then ruled the Roman world. He did not present himself in the temple of Jupiter, but appeared at the sacred games. The Senate erected in his honour a triumphal arch, and there being no sculptor in the capital capable of adorning it, the Arch of Trajan was meanly stripped of many of its most elegant figures for its decoration, so that the curious antiquarian can discover Parthian captives prostrate at the feet of a prince who never carried his arms beyond the Euphrates, and trace the head of Trajan on the trophies of Constantine. The inscription attributing his victory to Providence and fortitude exhibits the Emperor's hesitation between the two religions, and his effort to combine them. Providence is the word in all his public decrees under which he veils his new composite religion. Even his statues halted between the two opinions. That now erected in Rome held in its hand his well-known paganly adorned spear, but it was in the form of a cross. His coins bore on the one side the monogram of CHRIST, on the other the figure of the invincible Sun-god, and the inscription, 'Sol-invictus,' as if he could not bear to relinquish the patronage of the bright luminary which represented to him, as to Augustus, his own guardian deity. His celebrated decree for the holy observance of the Lord's Day, as the weekly Christian festival, shows the same devotion to the Sun-god; for, endeavouring to unite the Christian and the pagan sentiments, he recommends the first day of the week to be kept holy by his subjects of both religions, as 'the venerable day of the Sun;' and he retains its old pagan name, '*Dies*

*Solis,* or *Sunday*. His famous edict of toleration, and almost all his subsequent edicts in favour of Christianity, betray the same spirit of vacillation in religion which was visible in his first visit to Rome, when he restored the pagan temples, and did not decline the title of Supreme Pontiff, by which he became the head of the pagan worship. This is still more striking in his principal standard, the far-famed *Labarum*, or *Laborum*, whose name still perplexes those Pharisees of history 'who strain out gnats and swallow camels.' The shaft of this celebrated banner was cased with gold; above the transverse beam which formed the cross was wrought in a golden crown the monogram, or rather the device in two letters, which signified the name of CHRIST. But the silken veil which hung down from the beam was curiously inwrought with the images of the reigning Emperor and his children, that whilst the Christians might venerate the Cross, the pagans might worship the Emperors, according to custom. This was the magnet which drew to Constantine's armies such multitudes of Christians, whose courage often turned in his favour the trembling scale of victory. It was intrusted to a guard of honour of fifty chosen soldiers, whose station was marked by dignities and emoluments; and whenever it was advanced in distress of battle, it animated the Christians with invincible enthusiasm, and scattered terror and dismay through the ranks of the enemy.

Constantine's visit to Rome lasted only three months; but they were eventful, for he there converted the contribution which Galerius had exacted from the Romans as a *tribute*, and which Maxentius had extorted as *free gift*, into a *perpetual tax*. The Senators and citizens were divided into several classes, of which the most opulent paid annually eight pounds of gold; the next paid four; the last two; and those whose poverty might have exempted them, were as-

essed at seven pieces of gold. He then by suppressing the famous Prætorian guards—dispersing among the legions the few that had escaped the fury of the sword, and destroying their fortified camp—gave a fatal blow to the power and dignity of the Senate and people, Henceforth the disarmed capital was safely exposed to the neglect or insults of its absent master ; who visited it but twice during the remainder of his life, to celebrate the solemn festivals of the tenth, and twentieth years of his reign.

Having secured the alliance of Licinius, the Illyrian Emperor, by bestowing on him in marriage the hand of his sister Constantia, and having exterminated the whole family of Maxentius, according to the old cruel policy of Rome ; he betook himself to perpetual motion, to exercise the legions, or to inspect the state of the provinces. During the following ten years he chiefly shines as a statesman, endeavouring to gild over the Roman law with a layer of Christianity ; so in rapid succession he issued edicts for toleration ; for the observance of Sunday ; the use of prayers in the army (these contained the germ of our grand *Te Deum*) ; the abolition of crucifixion ; the prohibition of that peculiarly Roman crime infanticide ; the suppression of private divination, of cruel and licentious rites, and of the gladiatorial games—all beneficent enactments. Beautifully, also, in accordance with his profession of Christianity were his edicts encouraging the emancipation of slaves, and the limiting all legal processes on the Sunday to this work of mercy.

The versatile Emperor, also regarding himself as the Bishop of bishops, because he was a consecrated ruler of the Roman world, often delivered sermons. On these occasions a general invitation was issued, and multitudes flocked to the palace to hear the Imperial preacher. He stood erect,

and then with a set countenance and grave voice, poured forth his address; to which, at the striking passages, the audience responded with loud cheers of approbation, the Emperor pointing upwards, as if to transfer the glory from himself to heaven. He usually preached on the general system of Christianity; the follies of Paganism; the Unity and Providence of God; and the history of the SAVIOUR, which he sometimes curiously illustrated from the Sybilline verses, by extracting from their thirty-four initial letters an acrostic, making the prophetic sentence, '*Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour of the World.*' Sometimes he applied to the SAVIOUR the famous fourth Eclogue of Virgil; as if the poet, inspired by the heavenly muse of Isaiah, had celebrated the return of the Virgin, the fall of the Serpent, the approaching birth of the god-like child, that offspring of Jupiter, who should atone for the guilt of the human kind, and govern the peaceful world, until a heavenly race should people it, and the innocence and bliss of the golden age should be gradually restored. He generally closed by fiercely attacking the avarice and rapacity of his courtiers, who cheered lustily, but did nothing of what he told them. On one occasion, amidst great applause, he caught hold of one of them, and drawing on the ground with his spear the figure of a man, thundered out, 'In this space is contained all that you will carry with you after death!' Never was a preacher more popular and more applauded than Constantine; and to the spiritual pride thus engendered, and to the demoralizing influence of his Oriental habits, may be ascribed the melancholy fact, that the Imperial preacher was a worse prince at the close of his reign than at its beginning, when he was little more than half a Pagan.

Licinius at length, having conquered the Eastern Emperor

Maximin, found leisure to contest with Constantine the sole government of the Roman world. The rivals met in fierce encounter at Ciabalis, on the river Saave, and on the plain of Mardia in Thrace. In both these bloody battles Licinius was defeated, with the loss of his bravest veterans, and his fierce spirit was reduced to sue for peace. Then followed several victories gained by the gallant young Crispus over the Franks and Alemanni, which taught them to dread the eldest son of Constantine, and the grandson of Constantius. A Gothic war engaged the Emperor himself, who at the head of his legions crossed the Danube — after repairing Trajan's bridge—penetrated into the strongest recesses of Dacia; and when he had inflicted terrible vengeance, granted peace to the suppliant Goths, on condition that, as often as they were required, they should supply his armies with a body of forty thousand soldiers.

Thus triumphant, Constantine could no longer bear a partner in the Empire; and confiding in the superiority of his genius, and military power, he, without any previous injury, assailed Licinius, in the eighth year of their truce. The civil war which followed was one of the most sanguinary in the Roman annals both by land and sea. Licinius, old as he was, called forth in the great struggle that spirit and those abilities by which he had gained the friendship of Galerius and the Imperial purple. Defeated at the battle of Hadrianople, with a loss of 34,000 men, he retired to Byzantium, a strongly fortified city justly considered as the key of Europe and Asia. When the great naval victory of Crispus drove him from Byzantium, he retired to the heights of Chrysopolis, or as it is now called, Scutari—where another total defeat, and the loss of 25,000 men irretrievably completed his ruin. Constantia, his wife, interceded with her brother for her fallen husband and obtained a promise, con-



firmed by an oath, of his life. Licinius laid himself and his purple at the feet of his lord and master, was raised from the ground with insulting pity, was admitted to the imperial banquet, and sent soon afterwards to Thessalonica, where he was privately put to death. Constantine, now sole ruler of the Roman world, in the thirty-seventh year after Diocletian had divided it with his associate Maximian, sent expresses through the Empire announcing the defeat of Licinius, who had been long the champion of paganism ; proclaiming himself the Christian conqueror, and exhorting all his subjects to imitate the example of their sovereign and become Christians. By his command many splendid buildings,—attached to the royal residences throughout the Empire and hence called Basilicæ—which had been used as halls of justice or exchanges, were converted into Christian churches. So the humble Christian ‘ houses of prayer ’ in the chief cities and towns suddenly changed both name and character. They now assumed the proud title of Basilicæ, and swelled aloft into the shape of a dome or branched out into the form of a cross—the timbers framed of costly cedars ; the roofs covered with tiles, perhaps of gilt brass ; the walls, the columns, the pavements incrustated with variegated marbles ; the Communion Tables were now called altars, and lavishly covered with the most precious ornaments of gold and silver, of silk and gems ! Little change was made in their internal arrangements. The wide central avenue became the *nave*—so called from the fanciful analogy of the Church to the Apostle Peter’s ship (*navis*). The two side aisles in which the male and female suitors for justice separately awaited their turn, were reserved for male and female worshippers. The *Bema*, or chorus, the place of the notaries and advocates, was now filled by the inferior clergy and singers and called the *transept*. The bishop took the throne of the Judge, and the superior clergy sat around

him on the seats of the assisting magistrates within the *chancelli*, or enclosures, hence called the *chancel*. The Roman and other politic bishops went further, and, to induce the multitude the more readily to embrace Christianity, assimilated the Christian worship as much as possible to the Pagan. In both the priests now wore equally splendid robes, mitres and tiaras. In both wax-tapers, processions, lustrations, images, and golden and silver vases were equally seen. Mosheim says that even the *lituus*, or divining staff of the Augurs of Ancient Romanism, found its counterpart in the crosier or bishop's staff. Constantine specifically invested the eighteen Basilicæ in Rome with the legal right of holding landed property, and of receiving it by bequest. This privilege, so acceptable to Roman avarice, led to that slow and imperceptible accumulation of wealth which powerfully tended to raise and perpetuate the papacy. A rent-roll is still extant, specifying some houses, shops, gardens, and farms which belonged to the three principal Basilicæ of Rome—St. Peter, St. Paul, and St. John Lateran—in the provinces of Italy, Africa, and the East. They produce besides a reserved rent of oil, linen, paper, aromatics, &c., a clear revenue of twelve thousand pounds sterling—a vast sum in those days. 'The authenticity of this record,' says Gibbon, 'has been suspected, like every similar record from the Vatican; but if forged it was the forgery of a time when farms, not kingdoms were objects of papal avarice.' The other eighteen hundred churches of the Empire were soon enriched by the frequent and unalienable gifts of Constantine, who assigned in each city a regular allowance of corn to supply the fund of ecclesiastical charity; and monks and nuns became his peculiar favourites, were often admitted to his presence, and received pensions for their support. The bishops were assigned an income of about six hundred pounds

sterling ; but the annual produce of the Roman ecclesiastical 'farms' amounted to about twelve thousand pounds sterling—an enormous sum for those days.

Gibbon also makes the startling statement, that in one year twelve thousand men were baptized at Rome, besides a proportionable number of women and children ; and that a white garment, with twenty pieces of gold, had been promised by the Emperor to every convert ! The Goths and Germans, who had enlisted under the standard of Rome, revered the Cross which glittered at the head of the legions, and their fierce countrymen, with all the barbarians who had hitherto donbtfully heard the Gospel from Roman exiles, soon learned to esteem a religion which had been so lately embraced by the greatest monarch, and the most civilized nation of the globe. The kings of Iberia and Armenia worshipped the God of their protector, and thus conciliated his favour. Christians multiplied in Persia, India, Arabia, and Abbyssinia, who, with all the other barbarian converts, soon formed a perpetual connexion with their brethren at 'Great Rome,' and humbly sought guidance from 'Peter's Chair.'

'Good morrow Philosopher !' was now the common salutation given to a Christian minister by a pagan, who turning to the crowd explained that it was 'his rule, never to slight the Philosopher's cloak.' 'Joy to thee, O Philosopher's cloak !' said Tertullian, 'a better philosophy has deigned to wrap itself in thy folds, since thou hast begun to be the garb of a Christian.' But this general use of the garb shows the number of pagan philosophers who, in this time of its triumph, adopted Christianity, and clouded its noble simplicity by their attempts to bring God's revelation under the the dominion of human reason ; whilst their proud mingling of the fancied merits of Asceticism with the all-sufficient merits of the Redeemer ere-long caused the 'filthy rags' of the Philosopher's

cloak to shroud the spotless robe of His righteousness. Mo-sheim also points out the incalculable mischief of their introduction into general use amongst Christians of that mode of disputing, which had victory rather than truth for its object ; which boldly maintained that it was no sin in a person to employ falsehoods and fallacies for the support of truth, when it was in danger of being borne down. This system, which made no difference between the confusion of an antagonist by artifice or solid argument, was called the *Economical*, a Greek word signifying to do a thing artfully and dexterously as a shrewd steward of a household—or rather like the *unjust* steward in the parable.

The confusion caused in the Church by this sudden and overwhelming crowd of nominal converts is indescribable. At Alexandria a presbyter named Arius excited the interest and admiration of his hearers, by plunging them into the deepest of all mysteries, the doctrine of the TRINITY. One day, in an assembly of the clergy over which their Archbishop Alexander presided, Arius broached some strange opinions on his favourite subject, which—more perhaps in the spirit of the baffled disputant, or the wounded pride of the dignitary, than of the serenity of the scholar, or the meekness of the Christian—Archbishop Alexander branded as ‘heretical ;’ and expelled ‘the impious presbyter’ from the Church. Rendered obstinate by this violence, Arius retired to Palestine ; and by his plausible statements and the pity excited for him as a persecuted man, gained over several eminent followers, particularly Eusebius, bishop of Cæsarea, and his cousin, Eusebius, the bishop of Nicomedia, by whose influence the Emperor’s sister, Constantia, became his warm ally. It was during this retreat that Arius wrote his famous *Thalia*, a poem of such profanity and indecency as to make but too

probable all the accusations of corrupt motives and corrupt conduct charged upon him by his adversaries.

Now from the very first it had been established as a fundamental maxim of the Roman constitution, that every rank of citizen was alike subject to the laws ; and that the care and support of religion was the right as well as duty of the civil magistrate. Hence arose the supreme authority exercised by the Christian Emperors for ages over the Church, because they could not think that they had forfeited, by their conversion, any branch of the Imperial prerogatives ; or that they were incapable of giving laws to a religion which they had protected and embraced. So Constantine wrote authoritatively to the disputants to moderate their violence, and refrain from ' their elaborate discussions on deep questions required by no law, but prompted by unprofitable leisure.' He commanded them to return to ' that reconciliation, which, after ill will is laid aside, often becomes more sweet than before.' He condescended to request them to restore to himself ' serene days, and nights void of care, that he might enjoy the pure light, and the pleasures of a quiet life.' Failing in these pacific efforts, he issued his commands for the convocation of the famous Council of Nice.

Dr. Stanley's researches and travels have recently thrown a brilliant light upon this memorable æra, of which I gladly avail myself. Indeed, it is impossible to over-rate its importance, for this Council was the earliest great historical event which affected the whole Church since the close of the Apostolic age. In the two intervening centuries there had been some stirring incidents, some great writers, abundance of curious and instructive usages. But all was isolated ; even the persecutions are imperfectly known. We are still in the Catacombs, and here and there a dim flickering light appears

to guide our devious steps. Here and there, we note the genuine grave of a martyr, or the picture of a primitive assembly; but the regular course of the Church's history does not begin till the Council of Nice. Then, for the first time, the Church meets the Empire face to face. The excitement and the shock, the joy and the disappointment, the hope of the meeting, communicate themselves to us. It is one of those moments in the history of the world which occur only once. It is the last point whence we can look back on the dark, broken road of the second and third centuries. It is the first point whence we can look forward to the new and comparatively smooth and easy course which the Church will have to pursue for two centuries onward, and over which I shall very speedily convey my kind reader. But it is needful here to remark, that the Church Councils on which we now enter differ widely from that held in Jerusalem, described in the Acts, and which consisted of the 'brethren' or main body of Christians, as well as of the Apostles and presbyters or elders; of the laity as well as of the clergy; whereas the subsequent Councils were likenesses of the ancient Roman Senate, the bishops being only the likenesses of the ancient tribunes; and the Sovereign's power also predominated in convoking and controlling them, as the Church has well remarked in her well-known Article (XXI.). Hence an appeal to a General Council in after times was always a half political, half spiritual weapon, opposed to Papal tyranny by princes.

At the foot of one of the high-wooded steepes of a mountain ridge of Bythinia lies a long inland lake—the Ascanian lake—which, communicating at its western extremity by a small inlet with the sea of Marmora, fills up almost the whole valley. At the head of the lake appears the oblong space of the ancient city of Nice, enclosed by the ruined walls, of which the regular square form indicates the Grecian origin of the city, con-

structed by the successors of Alexander on the same model as Alexandria, Antioch, Damascus, Philadelphia, and Palmyra—a complete square, intersected by four straight streets, adorned with a colonnade on each side. The ancient walls still exist, but within their circuit all is now a wilderness; over broken columns and through tangled thickets, the traveller must make his way to the wretched Turkish village of Is-nik, which occupies the centre of the vacant space. In the midst of this village—surrounded by a few ruined mosques, on whose summits stand the never-failing storks of the deserted cities of the East—remains a solitary church, dedicated to the ‘Repose of the Virgin;’ and within it is still to be seen a very ancient rude painting, commemorating its great Council, the one event which, amidst all its vicissitudes, has secured for Nice its immortal name. Its facility of access by the lake; its short distance from Nicomedia, now many years the chosen Capital of the East and Seat of the Roman Empire; its name, the City of Victory (*Nike*); its coins bearing the figure of Victory; this happy omen and favourite watchword of Constantine, decided him on selecting this city for the Council. Those of my readers who take pleasure in tracing historic parallels, will at once think of the famous Council, held about eleven hundred years later, at Constance, which had such a powerful influence in developing the glorious Reformation. There Constance rises to view, also a frontier town, on the banks of a large lake, easy of access, and furnishing that then important article of food, plenty of fish; a neutral city, whose name, Constantia, of happy omen for the stability of the popedom, alone is said to have induced the reluctant pope to consent to its selection as the locality of the Council, on which he felt his doom to depend.

Whitsuntide, 325, was the time appointed by the Emperor for the assembling of the Council; and his summons was accom-

panied by letters to the civil authorities, enjoining them to furnish the supplies needful for the journey. The posting arrangements of the Empire were so admirably arranged as to make such a convention far more easy than would have been the case at any period of the Dark Ages. The great Roman roads were like rail-roads, straight as arrows from the golden milestone at the Capitol of Rome to the remotest extremity of the Empire. Each bishop was to have at least two presbyters and three slaves in his retinue. They travelled in public carriages, or on horses ; mules and asses were provided for riding and carrying baggage. This precedent was, like all other Roman usages, steadily followed, and the summoning of a Council was always afterwards known throughout the Empire by the stir along the roads in every direction. Three hundred and eighteen bishops, two thousand presbyters, with a multitude of deacons and laymen, poured into Nice at the given time, and assembled in the ancient gymnasia of the city. Eusebius, of Cæsarea, himself an eye-witness, as he enumerates the various characters of that celebrated Council, compares the scene of their meeting 'either with the divers nations assembled at Pentecost, or with a garland of flowers, gathered in season, of all manner of flowers, woven together as a peace-offering after the tranquillization of the Empire, or with a mystic dance in which each actor performs his own part, to complete a sacred ceremony.' There were present, learned and illiterate, courtiers and peasants, old and young, aged bishops on the verge of the grave, and beardless deacons just entering on their office. Other Councils might be larger, but none could approach this in the number of those who still bore marks of their suffering for the SAVIOUR. Some bore on their sides or backs the scars of the wounds inflicted by instruments of torture. On others were the traces of that peculiar cruelty which dis-



tinguished the last persecution, the loss of a right eye, or the searing of the sinews of the right leg to prevent their escape from working in the mines. Indeed the older or by far larger part of the Assembly had lived through the worst persecution, and they now came like a war-worn regiment out of some frightful siege or battle, decimated or mutilated by the tortures or the hardships they had undergone. Both at the time and afterwards, it was on their noble constancy as 'confessing CHRIST before men,' quite as much as it was on their character as a General Council, that their authority reposed; and, in the whole proceedings of the Assembly the voice of an old 'confessor' was received with the utmost deference. Foremost in dignity was Alexander, the aged Archbishop of Alexandria, whose imprudence had probably provoked the quarrel, and whose vacillation had encouraged it. He was known, says Dr. Stanley, by a title which he alone officially bore in that Assembly, that afterwards world-known title of *Pope*. This peculiar Alexandrian title originated thus. Down to Heraclas (A.D. 230), the bishop of Alexandria being the sole Egyptian bishop, was called 'Abba,' or father, and his clergy 'presbyters,' or Elders. From his time more bishops were created, who then received the title of Abba, and consequently the name of *Papa* ('ab-abba,' or grandfather,) was given to the primate, who was the genuine Pope. 'The pope of Rome' was a phrase that had not yet become known to history, for after becoming the general title of the superior bishops, and even of abbots, it was fastened on the bishop of Rome so late as the seventh century. Close beside him is the famous Athanasius. Some twenty years before Alexander was struck by the sight of a number of little boys playing church-plays on the sand, among whom a fine little fellow acted the favourite part of boy-bishop with such seeming wisdom and dignity, that Alexander took a

fancy to him and undertook his education ; and now Athanasius is his trusted archdeacon, or chief deacon. He is of low stature, and hardly twenty-five years of age, but of lively genius, of bright serene countenance, and by the depth and eloquence, learning and energy of his arguments, and by his action he has closely rivetted the attention of the Council.

In appearance and spirit his very opposite stands Arius, the Incumbent or Rector of Baucalis, according to the first beginnings of the parochial system organised at Alexandria. He is sixty years of age, very tall and thin, and apparently unable to support his stature ; has an odd way of wriggling and contorting himself, which his opponents compare to the wriggings of a snake. He would be handsome but for the emaciation and deadly pallor of his face and his furtive down look. At times the veins of his temples throb and swell, and his limbs tremble, as if suffering from some violent malady. There is a wild look about him, which at first sight is startling. His dress and demeanour bespeak him to be a rigid ascetic, and his hair hangs in a tangled mass over his forehead. He is usually silent, but at times breaks out into fierce excitement such as gives the impression of madness, yet there is a winning sweetness in his voice, and he has a winning seductive manner which fascinates those who come across him. Alexandria had at this period 600,000 inhabitants, and this strange captivating moon-struck giant is said to have had from the first a following of seven hundred ladies of the highest fashion in the city. There too was the bigotted bishop, to whom Constantine once said with a smile, 'Acesius, take'a ladder and get up to heaven by yourself.' How many selfish bigots in our days have borrowed the ladder of Acesius ! Only eight Western bishops attended the Council, of whom one was the 'Abrahamic Old Man called Hosius the holy,' the learned bishop of Cordova, in

Spain. Bishop Sylvester of Rome pleaded sickness, and was represented by the two presbyters, who according to the Emperor's arrangement should have accompanied him.

Before the formal opening of the Council there were fierce rencounters between the opponents and between the bishops and philosophers, who gathered to Nice from curiosity, or from their passion for disputation. Arius, 'the sly snake,' all the while kept mystifying the question of the SAVIOUR'S Divinity with a cloud of subtle verbal distinctions, which remind us of the advice given by 'his cousin' Mephistopheles to theologians willing to do *his* work :—

'It is a dangerous vocation,  
This same Theology : its ways  
Are such a tangled serpent maze—  
Such poison everywhere disguised—  
And everywhere as medicine prized—  
That which is which, or why 'tis so,  
Few can conjecture—none can know.  
The best thing that the case affords  
Is—stick to some one doctor's *words* :  
Maintain his doctrines out and out,  
Admit no qualifying doubt ;  
But stick to *words* at any rate,  
Their magic bids the temple gate  
Of Certainty fly safely ope—  
*Words, words* alone, are your best hope.'

—ANSTER'S FAUST.

An affecting incident stilled for a time the hubbub of controversy. When disputes were running so high in the Assembly, from the mere pleasure of displaying superiority in argument, that there seemed no end of the quarrel, suddenly a simple-minded layman, who by his sightless eye and limping leg bore witness of his zeal for the Christian faith, stepped forward and said, 'CHRIST and His Apostles left us not a system of logic, nor a vain deceit, but a naked truth to

be guarded by faith and good works.' The Assembly was struck by the happy application of this pious and sensible lesson; and after hearing this plain truth 'gave the more earnest heed' to Athanasius, as he appealed to the 'Law and to the Testimony,' to the Word of God and not the word of man, to establish the grand central doctrine of Christianity—the Divinity of CHRIST.

By the Emperor's direction—proving how completely the Council was under his control—the Assembly transferred its sessions to the great hall in the palace, where he made his appearance, and his towering stature, his strong-built frame, his broad shoulders, his handsome features were worthy of his magnificent position. There was a brightness in his look, and a mingled expression of fierceness and gentleness in his eagle-eye which well became one, who, as Augustus before him, had fancied, and perhaps still fancied, himself to be a favourite of the sun-god Apollo. The vast Assembly was further struck by the dazzling, perhaps barbaric magnificence of his dress. Always careful of his appearance he was so on this occasion in an eminent degree. His long hair, false or real, was crowned with the Imperial diadem of pearls. His purple or scarlet Imperial robe blazed with precious stones and gold embroidery. He was shod in the scarlet shoes and hose then confined to the Roman Emperors, now perpetuated alone in the Roman Pope and Cardinals. He had a habit of tossing back his head and casting bright keen looks about him which terrified—his flatterers said dazzled like the sun—all around him, but his voice was wonderfully gentle and soft. It was observed that, as the Emperor took his seat on his low golden throne, and looked round on the venerable Assembly, he seemed awe-struck, and his face was crimsoned with a blush. How far more innocent was Constantine's blush than that which became

memorable eleven hundred years afterwards in the greatest Council of the Papal Church—‘the blush of Sigismund,’ observed at Constance, remembered at Worms!

Constantine took an active part in the discussions, not as a theologian but as a statesman desirous of peace; his sweet gentle voice was raised, in such broken Greek as he possessed, to obtain a patient hearing for both sides, that unanimity might be re-established. Two long months wore on in this memorable discussion, during which, as Neander observes, ‘Athanasius contended for the Divinity of CHRIST as he did for half-a-century afterwards, not as for a mere speculative doctrine and interest, but, as it was in reality, for a vital Christian interest; for on holding fast this truth he knew and felt, depended the whole unity of the Christian consciousness of God, the completion of the Revelation of GOD in CHRIST, the reality of the redemption which CHRIST wrought, and of the Communion with GOD restored by HIM to believing man.’

A very providential discovery thoroughly disconcerted the persevering and unscrupulous tactics of the caviller Arius. A letter of Eusebius of Nicomedia was produced in the Council, declaring that to assert the SON to be *uncreated* would be to say that He was of *one substance (Homocousion)* with the FATHER. ‘So,’ says Ambrose, ‘the weapon with which they had been seeking to cut off the head of their enemy, was suddenly drawn from their own scabbard against themselves.’ Origen had given that title to the SAVIOUR near a century before, and all the honours which Arius was willing to concede to Him faded away like stars before the returning sun, when that true and Scriptural title of *oneness* in essence with the FATHER, which He Himself had claimed as His due (John, x. 30; xvii. 11, 22) was applied to Him by the Council.

The flight of Arius from the Council was precipitated by the reading of the infamous songs which he had written under the name of Thalia, in the low, licentious metre of the heathen ballad-writer Sotodes, and set to tunes used in the low revels of Alexandria, for decrying the Divinity of the SAVIOUR. All the bishops, on hearing the songs, raised their hands in horror, and, after the manner of Orientals when wishing to show their disgust at blasphemous words, kept their ears fast closed, and their eyes fast shut. The ancient creed of the Church in Palestine, with the insertion of the grand title now recognized as the SAVIOUR'S due, was then adopted; and it is pleasing to know that it is the basis of the Nicene Creed, which we profess as our own faith on every LORD'S Day. It contains the famous title now given by the whole Church to the Saviour, and, with the small alterations made at the Council of Constantinople, fifty-six years after, is nearly the same now that it was at Nice. One sentence, which was omitted as peculiar to its original locality, must have had a touching sound, repeated among the hills and valleys of the Holy Land, 'Who for our salvation wast incarnate, and lived amongst men.'

Arius himself slunk away before the close of the Council; his book was burnt, and he himself prohibited from returning to Alexandria, where a singular custom commemorated his prohibition. There, alone, in Christendom, no presbyter was allowed to preach. Arianism, indeed, lingered long, both in the Empire and the surrounding nations, being vigorously disseminated by the exiled Arians; but the noble creed, so simple, moderate, and comprehensive, remained a bulwark of the truth, in all its pathos and solemnity. One of the closing days of the Council was marked by one of its most interesting scenes. A decree was proposed by the Ascetic party, that all the married clergy were to separate from their wives!

The opposition came from a very unexpected quarter. From amongst the Egyptian bishops, stepped out into the midst, looking angrily out of his one remaining eye, and halting violently on his paralyzed leg, the old confessor of CHRIST Paphnutius. With a roar of indignation rather than with a speech, he broke into the debate:—‘Lay not this heavy yoke upon the clergy. “Marriage is honourable in all.” By exaggerated strictness, you will do the Church more harm than good. All cannot bear such an Ascetic rule. The wives themselves will suffer from it. Marriage itself is continence. It is enough for a man to be kept from marriage after he has been ordained according to the ancient custom; but do not separate him from the wife whom once for all he married when he was still a layman.’ His speech produced a profound sensation. His own austere life of celibacy gave force to every word that he uttered; he showed that rare excellence of appreciating difficulties, which he himself did not feel, and of honouring a state of life which was not his own. He has been rewarded, by the gratitude of the whole Eastern Church, which still, according to his advice now almost enjoins marriage upon all her clergy as a qualification for admission to the ministry, without permitting it afterwards. Bishop Paphnutius was highly honoured by the Emperor, who lodged him in his own palace, often listened to his story of the frightful scenes of the Diocletian persecution, and reverently touched his wounds. It is also noteworthy that Neander, the noblest of all the advocates for the Christian Minister’s Family as the model family of his people, lived all his own long studious life, ‘a single man and yet true father,’ like several of our noble Reformers, and yet he says that the first upholders of clerical celibacy, ‘failed of a full view of Divine Love, which instead of destroying the natural affections, should ennoble and refine them.’ All but two or

five of the bishops signed the decrees of the Council; set their seal to their noble Nicene Creed; agreed upon a pastoral letter to all the Churches upholding the SAVIOUR'S Divinity and repudiating the novel and impious opinions of Arius; and finally passed a decree giving to the bishops of Alexandria, Rome, and Antioch, severally, the same pre-eminence over their respective surrounding bishops, so they had no idea of any supremacy in 'the chair of Peter.'

Bishop Hosius *first* signed the decrees, and the Roman presbyters then affixed the signature of the bishop of Rome, who in no other way took any part in this the most momentous and memorable Council that ever sat in Christendom. Constantine entertained them at a sumptuous banquet when their labours were finished; and his parting address, urging them to win over the pagans, with the art of the physician who mingles sweets with his disagreeable medicines, but too clearly shows the mischievous bribery which he himself adopted, instead of allowing Christianity to make its way by its own heaven-supplied powers.

After the Council had separated, Constantine visited Rome to celebrate the twentieth year of his reign with solemn games and festivals, in remembrance of the modest acceptance of the Imperial power by Augustus, on condition of the trust being renewed after every ten years. 'This comedy,' says Gibbon, 'was preserved to the latest ages of the Empire, and in the case of Constantine it was characteristically blended with the events following his conversion.' But two events of this fatal visit turned this comedy into a tragedy. The first was the celebration of the great pagan festival held on the Ides of Quintilis (15th of July), in memory of the battle of the Lake Regillus, when the twin-gods Castor and Pollux were fabled to have fought for Rome, and brought the glad tidings of the victory to the city. On this day a grand muster and in-



spection of the Roman knights formed part of the pagan ceremony in honour of the equestrian gods. All the knights, clad in purple and crowned with olive, rode on in a stately procession to the Forum, forming a cavalcade of 5,000 horsemen, which was considered one of the most splendid pageants of Rome. This is the festival which Macaulay has celebrated in these spirit-stirring lines, which will place us more in the presence of the spectacle which Constantine saw, than any prose description :—

‘Ho, trumpets, sound a war-note !  
Ho, lictors, clear the way !  
The knights will ride in all their pride,  
Along the streets to-day.

To-day the doors and windows  
Are hung with garlands all,  
From Castor in the Forum  
To Mars without the wall.

Each knight is robed in purple,  
With olive each is crown’d ;  
A gallant war-horse under each  
Paws haughtily the ground.

While flows the Yellow River,  
While stands the Sacred Hill,  
The proud Ides of Quintilis  
Shall have such honour still.

Gay are the Martian Kalends :  
December’s Nones are gay,  
But the proud Ides, when the squadron rides  
Shall be Rome’s whitest day.’

Constantine waxed wroth at finding paganism as powerful as ever at Rome, and displaying all its magnificence in this popular festival, notwithstanding all his own patronage

of Christianity. But when the sham knights after their sham battle rode on,

‘In bloodless pomp array’d,  
The pasteboard triumph and the cavalcade;’

high specimen as he was himself of a great military chief, he contemptuously tossed back his head, drew himself up to his full stately height; and casting on his courtiers one of his brightest looks, almost a glare, he uttered one of his famous cold sarcastic sayings, contrasting the childish sports of these children with the exploits of their manly fathers. The Romans were furious; a riot broke out in the streets; a courtier rushed breathlessly into the palace to announce that stones had been thrown at the head of one of the Emperor's statues. He only calmly passed his hand over his face, and said with a smile, ‘It is very surprising, but I don't feel in the least hurt.’

But the disgust which he thus conceived against the incurable paganism and the degeneracy of the Romans rankled deep in his mind; and side by side we dimly trace the horrible domestic tragedy, which was connected more or less certainly with his last visit to Rome; and which, in the mystery which still shrouds it, and in the consequences to which it led, ranks with any which history or fiction has ever portrayed. Immediately after his accession he had suppressed the odious and numerous gangs of secret informers that infested Rome. Now, as if suspicious that some widely ramified and darkly organized conspiracy was afoot, he issued a proclamation inviting by large rewards those informations which he had before nobly disdained. Hence some conjecture that Constantine no longer stood superior to that common failing of weak monarchs, a jealous dread of the heir to the

throne, and that his gallant son Crispus fell a victim to the Satanic arts of his Roman accusers. But the general opinion traces the frightful catastrophe to the infamous intrigues of the low-born Empress-mother Helena and the high-born reigning Empress Fausta, who had long embroiled the court with their animosities and rivalry; and who, amongst the numerous princes and princesses sprung from the double marriages of Constantine and of his father, not only found agents for carrying out their dark intrigues, but victims for their fiendish malice. Fausta at first triumphed over her rival, in the execution, and that by his own father's orders, of her step-son Crispus, on a horrible charge, and also of the Emperor's nephew Licinius, torn from his mother's arms and murdered in the remote East. Helena, furious at the loss of her favourite grandson, turned the dark suspicions of her son on Fausta herself, whom she accused of unfaithfulness with one of the Imperial guards, and caused to be suffocated in the vapours of the Imperial bath.

The Emperor's passionate remorse, so the story runs, taking the form of the devotion of the princes and prelates of the Dark Ages, sought to atone for his crimes in the building of Churches at Rome, and in attaching the peculiar privilege to the See of Rome of legally receiving bequests, together with the gift of the Lateran palace, which had belonged to the Empress Fausta, as the price of the bishop's absolution. In corroboration, we have the remarkable facts, that parts of the building are actually of Constantine's time; that it must be from some strong historical reason that the Lateran and not the Vatican was the early residence, and still the scene of the enthronization and coronation of the popes; that here and not in St. Peter's have all the Roman Councils been held; and that this and not St. Peter's is the Cathedral Church of Rome.

‘This,’—if we may apply Ariosto’s words as translated by Milton—

‘This is that gift, if you the truth will have,  
Which Constantine to good Sylvester gave.’

This is the origin of that monstrous forgery ‘the Donation of Constantine,’ which gravely professes to be the very document by which the Emperor granted to the Roman bishop Sylvester and his successors, ‘*supremacy* over the four principal Sees of Antioch, Alexandria, Constantinople and Jerusalem, and also over all the churches in the universal world; together with his crown, sceptre and other ensigns of Imperial dignity—of course including his scarlet shoes—also Rome and its territory; also all the provinces of Italy and the Western regions, as well as estates of possession—for decking the lights of the Churches of Saints Peter and Paul—in the East, and even in the Northern and Southern region, viz., in Judea, Greece, Asia, Thrace, Africa, or in the different *Islands* !!!’ The extraordinary use made of this portentous fable in the Dark Ages caused the most curious and eventful changes amongst the nations of Europe; and their consequences remain to this day in full operation, as we shall see in the course of this history.

Even after the progress of criticism had taught the great Italian poet Ariosto to place the donation of Constantine in the moon, amongst the things which have never been; and after the pen of Valla had transpierced the bubble, the papal historians still clung to the fable, though at the risk of making the temporal power of the pope, the price of an absolution for the murder of a son, a wife, a nephew. But whilst it is false that Constantine gave the Roman States to Sylvester, the wealth which instantly flowed in upon the bishop of Rome, when bequests could be legally enjoyed by

him, laid the foundation of certain spiritual autocracy in a city where wealth secured power more completely than in any other on the face of the earth. And this was the origin of the temporal power of the popedom, as Cyprian's strange theory was the germ of its spiritual sovereignty.

Secret as these horrors might have been, enough transpired to rouse the hostility of popular feeling at Rome, already wounded by the Emperor's neglect of the sacred rites of the city. An inscription was found one day over the gates of the Palatine, catching at once the two weak points of the Emperor's character, his Oriental luxury and his cruelty to his own family, and likening his reign to that of Nero.

So Constantine's determination to found a new Capital, and to abandon Rome for ever was caused not only by remorse for the crimes which he had there sanctioned, but by his revulsion from Roman paganism with which he had come into such disagreeable collision on the Regillian festival; and his exasperation at this insult which was the more exquisitely galling from its truth. A singular dream which Constantine had as he slept for the first time after its capture within the walls of Byzantium is reported to have decided him in selecting that city for his new capital. Its patron genius stood before him, as a withered beldame, whose sinister aspect and wild attire betrayed her pagan nature, but she was suddenly transformed into a fair budding virgin, all Christian in grace and sweetness, whom his own hands adorned with the symbols of Imperial greatness.

Certainly no other city in the Roman world could vie with Byzantium in its central situation—equally commanding its European, Asiatic, and African provinces—in its harbour, so curved for seven miles as to secure it from hostile attempts and from tempests, hence so strongly attracting the commerce of the world as to be named from time immemorial, the

*Golden Horn* ; whilst the delicious mildness of the climate and fertility of the soil made the hills and dales around smile with a rich prospect of vineyards, gardens, and teeming harvests. Once determined to found a rival Rome on the shores of the beautiful Bosphorus, Constantine pursued his object with all the ardour of a lover. No expense was spared to raise a city worthy of the Seat of Empire ; no art or influence to collect inhabitants worthy of such a city, which was to wear an exact resemblance of Rome, and be called Constantinople in perpetual memory of its Imperial founder. The palace arose, in its dimensions and magnificence, equal to that of the older city. The skill of the architect was lavished on the mansions of the nobles, who obeyed the Imperial invitation, so exactly to represent the dwellings of their ancestors in the ancient capital, that their wondering eyes could scarcely believe their removal. The Senate-house, the Augusteum, was prepared for their counsels ; for the mass of the people, markets and fountains and aqueducts, theatres and amphitheatres, porticoes, basilicæ, and forums, rose with the rapidity of enchantment. Of the churches built at this period, that dedicated to S. Sophia (the Supreme Wisdom), that to Eirene (Peace), and that to the Twelve Apostles—consecrating to individual saints was of later date—were more magnificent than the churches of Rome. Constantine's desire to unite paganism with Christianity still appears in the erection of his famous porphyry pillar. It rose to the height of one hundred and twenty feet, and on its top stood a magnificent colossal statue of himself, under the image of his ancient patron deity Apollo, but the glory of the sunbeams was composed of the emblems of the crucifixion, and underneath its feet were buried, in strange juxta-position, pretended fragments of the true Cross and the ancient palladium of Rome, which had been stolen from its temple in order to

transfer the eternal supremacy of the old capital to the new ! Was this paganism approximating to Christianity, or Christianity degenerating into paganism ?

This pagan veneration for relics was another of the disastrous consequences of Constantine's fatal visit to Rome, for the old Empress-Mother's remorse drove her, at this period, to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, as a penance for her crimes. During her residence there, some pretended sacred relics were presented to the aged Helena, who, illiterate as she was, and infected with the now prevalent veneration for those objects, received them with such joy that they multiplied in Jerusalem with magical profusion and rapidity. Of all the new found relics, by far the most transparently deceptive, the most permanently mischievous, and the most gainful, was the pretended discovery of the true Cross. It was suddenly reported throughout wondering Christendom that tradition or a dream having revealed the place of the Holy Sepulchre, the temple of Venus, which Hadrian had caused to be erected over it in mockery, had been thrown down by the Imperial command, excavations had been made, the Holy Sepulchre had come to light, and with it three crosses, near which lay a tablet bearing the inscription originally written by Pilate in three languages over the true Cross, and that as it was doubtful to which of the crosses the inscription belonged, a miracle had decided the claims of the genuine Cross !!! Neither Helena nor her son noticed the gross improbability of the cross being buried with our SAVIOUR, and not only that on which He suffered, but those of the two thieves also. They forgot the angelic message directing the first believers to depart *from* the sepulchre and meet their risen Lord elsewhere. They forgot the righteous wrath with which good King Hezekiah had destroyed the Brazen Serpent, when it was turned into an object of relic-worship. They

joyfully divided their precious treasure ; part enshrined in a silver case, remained at Jerusalem, from whence pilgrims constantly bore fragments of the still vegetating wood to the West, till enough was accumulated in the different churches to build a ship of war ! Constantine appropriated to himself a piece of the pretended true Cross for his statue ; and converted the pretended sacred nails attached to it to a use so like himself and his age as to require special notice. One was turned into the bit of his war-horse, the other into an ornament of his helmet. How like the fierce illiterate military Emperor of the old pagan age ! After the erection of churches over the caves of Bethlehem, Olivet, and Jerusalem, at the Emperor's cost, Helena, to complete her self-punishment, retired to die at her obscure birth-place. Rome and Constantinople dispute the possession of her remains for passionate worship ; so the credulous and miserable old Empress has the unenviable pre-eminence of being not only the first pilgrim, but, in life and in death, the grand patroness of relic-worship.

Constantine was no less the patron of image-worship by the multitude of effigies of the Scripture-worthies which he erected in his new capital as substitutes for the idols of pagan Rome. But it is touching to hear that the first monument which he erected in his new city was the golden statue of Crispus, underneath which was written 'To my innocent and unfortunate son.' Even the ladies and the nobles of his court, in place of having, according to custom, their robes embroidered with the representation of a whole chase in gold and silver threads, exhibited them gaudily bedizened with Scripture-scenes, such as the marriage-feast of Cana, the recovered paralytic carrying his bed, or the resurrection of Lazarus ; and they believed that this dress made them well-pleasing in the sight of God !

In such scenes how refreshing it is to hear the famous



reply of the bishop of Cæsarea to the Emperor's sister Constantia, when she asked him for an image of our SAVIOUR :— ‘What do you understand by an image of CHRIST? You can surely mean nothing but the likeness of the earthly form of a *Servant* which for man's sake He, for a short time, assumed. Even when in *that* His Divine Majesty beamed forth at the transfiguration, His disciples were unable to bear the sight of such glory. But now the figure of CHRIST is become wholly deified and spiritualized, transfigured into a form analogous to His Divine nature. Who, then, has power to draw the image of such glory, exalted above every earthly form? Who, to represent in lifeless colours the splendour which irradiates from such transcendent Majesty? Or could you be satisfied with such an image as the pagans made of their gods and heroes, which bore no resemblance to the thing represented? But if you are not seeking for an image of the transfigured God-like form, but for one of the earthly mortal body, so as it was constituted before this change, you must have forgotten those passages in the Old Testament, which forbid us to make any image, of that which is in heaven above or in the earth beneath, in the worship of God. Where have you ever seen any such in the Church, or heard of their being there from others? Have not such things been banished far from the churches over the world?’

The restoration of Arius and his party was another consequence of Constantine's fatal visit to Rome, for when Constantia, whose son had perished by his orders, was soon after on her death-bed, she entreated to see the Emperor once more. He came and the parting request of the sister to whom he had so barbarously behaved, was that he should recall Arius, and restore unity to the Church. His troubled conscience and desire for the fusion of parties prevailed and obtained her request. As soon as the Imperial favour was

understood to be on the side of Arius, the troubles of Athanasius began. A few months after the Council of Nice and after the death of Alexander, he had been unanimously elected Archbishop of Alexandria; and it was easy to collect calumnious charges against him. His bold appeal to the justice of the Emperor, as he passed on horseback through the principal street of Constantinople, resulted in his banishment to the remote city of Treves in Gaul.

Arius had now obtained the good graces of the vacillating Emperor; and his unqualified—his opponents said hypocritical—acceptance of the Nicene Creed, which was now received unanimously throughout Christendom, had placed him in the popular position of a victim of intolerance. His party revived and increased in Constantinople. ‘Let others,’ says Fletcher of Saltoun, ‘make the laws, give me the making of the songs of a country.’ Arius was the first to avail himself of this means of impressing his doctrines upon the popular ear. He composed songs for sailors, millers, and travellers; and set them to common airs, ‘beguiling the ignorant by the sweetness of his music into the impieties of his doctrines.’ Arian singers used to parade the streets of Constantinople by night, thundering out those ballads, which generally closed by one of the Arian corruptions of the venerable Doxology, or Hymn by which the primitive Christians celebrated the glory of the Blessed Trinity, and which our Reformers so faithfully introduced into our Liturgy after every Psalm. Arius was recalled to Constantinople, and his party bore him through the wondering city with loud acclamations. As he passed the porphyry pillar, he was observed to writhe more violently, turn more deadly pale, and descend from his chariot. His return was anxiously expected but in vain, for he had perished miserably. But his party, led by Eusebius of Nicomedia,

kept their vantage ground at the Imperial Court, and it was unquestionably at their suggestion that Constantine celebrated the thirtieth year of his reign by erecting a most magnificent Church over the supposed site of the Holy Sepulchre, at Jerusalem. This Church of the Resurrection, afterwards called of the Holy Sepulchre, stood in a large open court, with porticoes on each side, and had the now usual porch, nave and choir. The nave was inlaid with precious marbles; and the roof, overlaid with gold, showered down a flood of light over the whole building; the roofs of the aisles were likewise overlaid with gold. At the farther end arose a dome supported by the twelve pillars, in commemoration of the Twelve Apostles; the capitals of which were silver vases. Within the Church was another court, at the extremity of which stood the Chapel of the Holy Sepulchre, lavishly adorned with gold and precious stones, as it were to perpetuate the angelic glory which streamed forth on the day of the Resurrection. So the foundation of the *Holy Places*, which have so often, and even in our days, cost the world torrents of human blood and mountains of treasure, originated in this black period of the life of Constantine.

Rome was now ruled by the Emperor's Præfect and his council of fifteen officers, who endeavoured to conceal their abject dependence upon their despotic master by the high sounding titles and trappings of majesty. They were saluted with the titles of 'your Sincerity,' 'your Gravity,' 'your Excellency,' 'your Eminence,' 'your sublime and wonderful Magnitude,' 'your illustrious and munificent Highness.' Their patents of office were curiously emblazoned with the Emperor's portrait. The book of mandates placed on a table, covered with a rich carpet, and illuminated by four tapers; allegorical figures of provinces and Imperial standards—such official ensigns were exhibited in their hall of

audience; and a triumphal car with banners of strange device preceded their pompous march in public. A philosophic observer of the new system of the Roman Government might well have mistaken it for a splendid theatre, filled with players of every character and degree; who repeated the language, and imitated the passions of their original model. The Senators obtained as their legal title the grand designation of 'Clarissimi,' or most Honourable; whilst the præfect and consuls had their vanity indulged by the new appellation of 'Illustrious and Respectable.'

The Roman bishop Sylvester gained a sudden and startling accession of real power by the removal of the seat of Empire from Rome. As the chief minister of the religion, now at least the legal religion, of the metropolis of the world, he had become the second Christian in the Empire as soon as Constantine had declared his adoption of Christianity; but it was the absence of the Emperor which allowed this most wealthy bishop's authority to grow up and develop its secret strength. By the side of the Emperor, perpetually contrasted with the pomp and majesty of the throne; constantly repressed in his slow but steady march to supremacy; or obliged to contest every upward step with a domestic superior, the bishop of Rome would have hardly gained more political power than the Patriarch of Constantinople, as its bishop now began to be called. Turn we from the Tiber to the Bosphorus, we shall see that there are two kings in the field, two suns in the sky. That figure which seemed so imposing when it was the only one which met our view, changes all its proportions when we see it overtopped by a vaster, loftier, darker figure, that sways the sceptre of the Roman world. In any other city, too, the bishop would in vain have asserted his boasted claim of descent from St. Peter; but in the ancient capital of the world all the awe which

to the Gospel than the heathen rule in Rome. To omit this important fact from my pages would be like giving a history of France or England, without any mention of Paris or London, for all the early Christians, as Dr. Wordsworth proves, identified the mystical BABYLON of the Apocalypse with Rome; and believed that the Man of Sin would be *there* revealed. This interpretation of the prophecy lingered in the Church even during the Dark Ages, and did much to produce the earthquake-shock of the Reformation, by which the 'tenth part of the City fell.'

Constantine saw his end approaching just as he had entered the sixty-fourth year of his age and the thirty-first of his reign. He was not yet baptized, since, as he himself had candidly admitted at the Council of Nice, 'few honestly loved the exhibitions of Christian doctrines, but few were friends of truth.' A death-bed baptism was to the half-converts of that day what a death-bed communion is to those of our own. They regarded the waters of baptism much as the pagans regarded the lustrations and purifications of their own religion, as a complete cleansing away of all their sins. So, partly from a superstitious dread, and partly from a desire, not peculiar to that or any age, 'of making the best of both worlds,' they deferred the ceremony to the moment when it might include the largest amount of the past, and leave the smallest future. He moved to a palace in the suburbs of Nicomedia, and then, calling the bishops around him, amongst whom the Arian Eusebius was chief, he requested to receive baptism. The Imperial purple was at last removed; he was clothed in robes of dazzling whiteness; his couch was covered with white also: in the white robes of baptism, on a white death-bed, lily-white himself, he lay, in expectation of his end; his last decree, in spite of the opposition of Eusebius, being the recall of the exiled Athanasius.

A wild wail of grief arose from the army and the people, on hearing that Constantine was dead. The body was laid out in a coffin of gold, and carried by a procession of the whole army, headed by his son Constans, to Constantinople, as it was his last request that he should be buried in the city which was to preserve his name. For three months it lay there in state in the palace, lights burning around and guards watching. All things went on as though he were yet alive. Every day, at the appointed hours, the principal officers of the State, the army, and the household, approaching the person of their Sovereign, with bended knees and a composed countenance, offered him their homage; nor could courtly flattery neglect the opportunity of remarking that Constantine alone had reigned after his death. When Constantius, his eldest son and heir, arrived from the East, the body of Constantine was borne with great pomp to the stately tomb which he had prepared for himself in the church which he had erected to the Twelve Apostles, where an eloquent funeral oration pronounced him *Isapostolos* (equal to the Apostles); and he was buried with Christian funeral rites. At Rome, the Senate and people, strong in their paganism, steadily denied his having entered the Christian Church. He was there regarded as one in the series of the pagan Cæsars, and enrolled like his predecessors amongst the gods of the heathen Olympus.

A picture of his Assumption into heaven was prepared, incense was offered to his statue, prayers offered at his shrine, and festivals were celebrated in his honour. So passed away the first Christian Emperor, the first Defender of the Faith, the first Imperial patron of the Papal See, and of the whole Eastern Church, the first founder of Holy Places—pagan and Christian, orthodox and heretical, liberal and fanatical—not to be imitated or admired, but much to be remembered and deeply to be studied. Such is Dr. Stanley's estimate of his

character ; but Niebuhr very justly observes, ‘ Many judge of Constantine by too severe a standard, because they regard him as a Christian : but I cannot look on him in that light. The religion which he had in his head must have been a strange jumble indeed. He was a superstitious man, and mixed up his Christian religion with all kinds of absurd superstitions and opinions.’

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(See Gibbon, ii. 2-363 ; iii. 1-199 ; vi. 161. Milman, *A. C.* ii. 49, 278, 303-476. *L. C.* i. 56-59. Neander, ii. 483 ; iii. 12, 36, 136, 249, 303, 310, 385-390. Gieseler, i. 303-305. Mosheim, i. 104, 251, 281-294, 312-317, 381-386. Euseb. *Vit. Constan.* Stanley, *Lect. Eastern Church*, *passim*. Catholic Layman, v. 25. Wordsworth, *Babylon*, 1-26. Niebuhr, *Lec. R. H.* v. 496.)

## CHAPTER VIII.

‘The royal-hearted Athanase  
With Paul’s own mantle blest.’

—LYRA APOSTOLICA.

CONSTANTIUS, CONSTANS, CONSTANTINE, MAGNENTIUS—JULIAN—  
JOVIAN—VALENTINIAN, VALENS—GRATIAN—VALENTINIAN II.  
—THEODOSIUS—HONORIUS, ARCADIUS.

EMPERORS cross the scene in startlingly quick succession during the remainder of this century, but the real champions are bishops. When the Roman monarchs lost sight of their ancient capital and Senate, they easily forgot the origin of their power; and in place of the modest titles of consul, proconsul, censor and tribune,—by the union of which offices it had been formed, and which betrayed its republican origin,—they associated with their high military title of Emperor, or Imperator, the epithet of *Dominus*, or Lord, as expressive of the despotic power of a master over his slaves. The form and seat of government were so intimately blended together, that it was impossible to transport the one to another locality without destroying the other. Hence the degeneracy of the Roman Emperors into mere Oriental despots amidst the voluptuous scenes of their new capital, where not even a spot existed to revive the ancient memories of heroic self-sacrifice, or of ambitious daring, for the preservation, or the aggrandizement, of the ‘majesty of Rome.’



Constantine's three sons—Constantius, Constans, and Constantine—had been named Cæsars by him, and on his death they divided the Empire among them. Constantius obtained the Asiatic provinces, with the capital Constantinople; Constans Italy and Africa; and Constantine Gaul, Spain, and Britain. Scarcely had Constantine been consigned to the tomb, than an awful dark shadow from the great tragedy of his life enshrouded the palace in the new Emperors' massacre of six out of the eight surviving princes of the Imperial family, their uncles and their cousins, on suspicion of their having poisoned their father. Their cousins Gallus and Julian—one suffering under a hopeless malady, the other a mere child—alone escaped with life; and were kept under vigilant watch. This Oriental massacre did not secure to the brothers the quiet possession of their dominions. Constans and Constantine were soon at deadly feud; when the latter fell, Constans did not long survive the fratricide, and was slain by his general Magnentius, who, in his turn, slew himself after suffering repeated and disastrous defeats, leaving Constantius sole master of the Empire.

Thus wore on twenty long years of general and woefully desolating civil war, during which the sole interest centred in Athanasius, and the varying fortunes of the great Arian struggle. That illustrious Defender of the Faith was of very small stature; 'a dwarf rather than a man,' was the taunt of his opponents, but he was of almost angelical beauty and expression of countenance. He had a slight stoop in his figure, a hooked nose, and small mouth; a short beard which spread out into large whiskers; and light auburn hair. When Ariansim was professed by the successor of Constantine, Athanasius retired to Rome, where he remained for three years, studying the Latin language, and so successfully vindicating the SAVIOUR'S Divinity, that the Roman

Church and its bishop, Julius II., heartily opposed Arianism ; assembled a Council of fifty Italian bishops to investigate the charges against Athanasius ; and unanimously acquitted him of them all. Dean Milman observes, that in pronouncing the Council's decree, Julius is far from asserting any pontifical supremacy, saying, 'It may be asked, "Why do you alone write?"—Because I represent the opinions of the bishops of Italy.' The weak and tyrannical Constantius was a vehement but vacillating supporter of Arianism, and alternately courted and persecuted Athanasius as his own fortunes varied during the whole twenty-years' civil war. Five times Athanasius was expelled from Alexandria, but during his exile continued his perpetual combat against Arianism, with such energy and success in almost every province of the Roman Empire, that our illustrious Hooker quotes as a proverb the celebrated saying, 'The whole world against Athanasius, and Athanasius against it.' Patient of labour ; gifted, even to old age, with the buoyant spirit and elastic step of youth ; master of a singularly clear, forcible, and persuasive style of speaking and writing, and of much profound and extensive learning ; the varied and rare talents of Athanasius commanded the respect and esteem of his clergy ; whilst his modest and fatherly visitation of them in their own homes, from the mouth of the Nile to the confines of Æthiopia ; and his familiar conversations with the meanest of the populace, and his humble salutation of the hermits of the desert, won their whole hearts. In the many persecutions which he suffered he always obtained support, or at least consolation, from the fidelity of his clergy ; the hundred bishops of Egypt adhered with unshaken zeal to the Trinitarian cause ; and the people of Alexandria were often impatient to rise in arms for his defence. So consistent was his life, that it was noted that in all the changing scenes of his

prosperity and adversity, he never once lost the confidence of his friends, or the respect of his adversaries.

Egypt, as we saw, was the parent of Monachism, and monks now abounded in it so exceedingly, that in regard to them the old saying was nearly verified, 'Egypt has as many gods as men.' They were all the inseparable allies of Athanasius, who in early life had been, for a short time, a hermit, which won their allegiance; and who, in later life, poured forth to them the news of the outer world. In the most critical moments of his life-long struggle, Athanasius sought refuge in their caves along the banks of the Nile, whenever his residence in Alexandria was insecure; and the hermits swarmed forth in innumerable crowds from their cells with thousands of blazing torches, their abbot leading his ass, to escort him to their impregnable retreats. Indeed the grandeur of his cause, and his noble championship of the SAVIOUR'S Divinity rallied around him all who revered the SAVIOUR among his countrymen, and assisted in making him formidable to his Arian opponents. No fugitive Stuart in the Scottish Highlands could count more securely on the loyalty of his subjects than did Athanasius, in his hiding-places in Egypt, count upon the faithfulness and secrecy of his countrymen. Sometimes it was the hermits who afforded him shelter in their rocky fastnesses; sometimes his fellow-townsmen supported him as he lay hid in his father's tomb outside the walls of their city; sometimes it was the beautiful Alexandrian maiden who, in her old age, delighted to tell how, when he had suddenly appeared at midnight wrapped in his short tunic and red cloak, she had concealed and tended him in her house, with provisions and books, till he was able, as suddenly, to reappear amongst his astonished friends. His whole course was that of an adventurous and wandering prince, rather than of a persecuted theologian; and when

in the brief intervals of triumph he was enabled to return to his native city his entrance was like that of a Sovereign rather than of a Prelate. As the mighty stream of the population rolled out of the gates to greet his coming, it was as if the Nile (this was the truly Egyptian figure that suggested itself to the historian,) at the height of its floods, scattering fertility as it went, had turned its course and flowed backwards from Alexandria towards the first outpost of the city. As now, so then, the usual mode of moving to and fro along the roads of Egypt was upon asses, and such used to be his triumphal entry—whilst branches of trees were waved aloft, and carpets of all the gayest colours and richest textures of Alexandria were spread beneath his feet. There was a long unbroken shout of applause as he rode along; thousands of hands clapped with delight; the air was scented with the fragrant ointments poured out, the city flashed with illuminations; public and private entertainments were given in every house; many vowed themselves to a monastic life, and in a far nobler sense of a Christian revival, the hungry and orphans were sheltered and maintained and every household so re-echoed prayer and praise, that it seemed to be transformed into a Church.

It has been often said, that a man who can provoke or enjoy a laugh is sure to succeed with his fellow-creatures. Such was Athanasius. Take his clever retort to Constantius, who at the instigation of his Arian persecutors had asked him to open an Arian church at Alexandria. 'I will grant a Church to the heretics at Alexandria, as soon as you grant a Church to the Orthodox at Antioch.' It was unanswerable for an intolerant faction always shrinks from such a test. Take again the well-sustained and pointed irony of the scene before the Council of Tyre, where he produces the man whom he is accused of having murdered, and whose right

hand he is supposed to have cut off. The muffled figure is introduced; he shows the face first, and asks all round: 'Is this Arsenius, whom I murdered?' He draws out from behind the cloak, first one hand, and then the other; 'Let no one now ask for a third; for two hands and two only, has every human being received from the Creator of all things.' A laugh or jest is often more efficacious, as well as safer, than a serious argument. The grave Epiphanius ventured to ask him one day what he thought of the opinions of his dangerous supporter, the fanatic Marcellus. A significant smile broke out over his whole countenance but he kept silence, and the inquirer had sufficient tact to perceive, that this meant 'Marcellus has had a narrow escape.' So again when asked his opinion on the common practice of death-bed baptisms, he replied with an unanswerable apologue. 'An angel once said to one of my predecessors, "Why do you send me these sacks (wind-bags) carefully sealed up, with nothing whatever inside?"' His faith was truly heroic. When the Alexandrian Church is panic-stricken by the accession of Julian, Athanasius is unmoved. 'It is but a little cloud,' he says, 'that will soon pass away.' He is pursued by his enemies up the Nile. They meet a boat descending the stream, and hail it with the shout so familiar to Egyptian travellers on the great river, and ask: 'Where is Athanasius?' 'Not very far off,' is the answer. The wind sweeps up the pursuers, the current carries down the pursued. It was Athanasius, who, hearing of their approach, took advantage of a bend in the mighty stream, to turn, meet, mislead, and escape them thus. One day he passes through one of the squares of Alexandria, and as a crow flies over his head, some pagans scornfully ask him what its croaking meant. He laughs in his sleeve and answers, 'Do you not hear? It cries *Cras, Cras*, which is in Latin

to-morrow, which means that *to-morrow* (*Cras*) something untoward will befall you, for to-morrow your pagan festival will be suppressed by an Imperial decree.' So it happened, and the pagans regarded him as a wizard ever after!

Athanasius was one of the few Christian writers whose fame was common to both East and West. His repeated missionary visits, during exile, to all the Churches of the East and West; his residence at Rome and acquisition of the Latin language, then almost universally spoken in the West; must have greatly contributed to this world-wide popularity. He had also a vast superiority over the subtle Easterns in his forcible, decided, and simple style of writing, acquired, perhaps, during his wanderings in the practical West, or from his admirable maxims for argument, 'Let disputants first ascertain the meaning of the terms they use; and then fix their attention on the things themselves.' So he dealt with the famous word '*Homoousion*,' (of the same substance), which he was the means of introducing into the Nicene Creed. His truly Christian rule, 'that it is the duty of Orthodoxy, or sound doctrine, not to compel but to persuade belief,' must also have finally conciliated even his adversaries. But what chiefly gained him the title of 'Athanasius the Great,' from his own age to ours, was his rare skill and fidelity in making the doctrine of our SAVIOUR'S Divinity and Atonement the sum and substance of his teaching. Here is a noble passage from one of his writings, in which he thus calmly yet convincingly proves the transforming power of these grand doctrines, even amongst the barbarous tribes, witnessed by himself:—'Who could overthrow in all these tribes of men, the worship of idols and plant virtue? Who except our LORD JESUS CHRIST, who not only preached by his disciples, but by His efficacious Divine influence on the minds of men, induced them to lay aside

their savagery and abandoning the worship of the gods of their country, to acknowledge Him? Who is it that unites in harmony those who have been used to hate each other? Who else could effect this but the beloved SON of the FATHER, the common SAVIOUR of all, JESUS CHRIST, whose *love* led him to suffer everything for us? Yes, it had been predicted even from the beginning, what an empire of peace He was to found—for the Holy Scriptures announce as the consequence of His coming, “And they shall beat their swords into plough-shares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.” (Is. ii. 4.) Nor is this any longer incredible, for even now the barbarians, to whom this savage spirit is innate, so long as they still offer to idols, rage against one another, and cannot rest a moment easy without the sword; but no sooner do they receive the doctrine of CHRIST, than they turn from the pursuits of war to agriculture, and instead of arming their hands with the sword, lift them up in prayer; and, in a word, from henceforth, instead of waging war with each other, they enter the lists against Satan, and the Spirits of Evil; and by self-command, and the virtues of the soul, seek to gain the victory over them. This is an evidence of the Divine power of our SAVIOUR—and the wonderful thing is, that they remain faithful unto death, and die as witnesses for Christ.’

Hence it was a saying of the following century, ‘Whenever you meet with a sentence of Athanasius and have not paper at hand, write it down upon your clothes.’ Hence the amazing popularity in the West of the ancient Hymn, or Confession of Faith, commonly called Athanasius’ Creed, which was, as Dr. Waterland proves, compiled about the year 430, by the celebrated Hilary, Archbishop of Arles, from the writings of Athanasius himself, and is an excellent

summary of the Faith maintained by him. It was not composed 'because the Christians believed more, but because the Arians believed less.' Luther used to call it '*a bulwark to the Apostles' Creed*,' so thoroughly did he understand its value, as a standing fence against the wiles and equivocations of most kinds of heretics.

Constantius, desirous of conciliating the important province over which Athanasius presided, had restored him to Alexandria during his own last struggle for power. Now sole Emperor, he threw off the mask, violently professed himself an Arian, and extorted from the Church-councils of Arles and Milan, by bribes, by threats, and by force, the condemnation of Athanasius. The Roman bishop Liberius, the successor of Julius, summoned Athanasius to Rome in a tone of declared hostility, and pronounced him cut off from the Communion of the West! A force of 5,000 men was sent to Alexandria to capture the Archbishop. It was midnight as they approached the city; and Athanasius, surrounded by the more devout of his flock, was at solemn prayer in the Church of S. Theonas. Suddenly the sound of trumpets, the trampling of steeds, the clash of arms, the bursting of the bolts of the doors, disturbed the devotions of the assembly. As the ominous sounds grew louder, Athanasius gave out the 136th Psalm, and the choristers' voices swelled into the solemn strain, 'Oh, give thanks unto the Lord, for He is gracious;' the people responded, 'For His mercy endureth for ever.' The clear, full voice of the congregation rose over the wild and melancholy uproar, now without and now within the Church. Athanasius calmly exhorted his people to continue their only defensive measures, their prayers to their Almighty Protector; and amidst a flight of arrows, he was hurried by some secret passage out of the tumult. So fierce was the Arian party, that they



broke open the tombs in quest of him ; and the Pagans triumphantly joined in the pursuit, shouting out, ' Long life to the Emperor Constantius, and to the Arians who have abjured Christianity ! ' They had indeed abjured all Christian humanity, holiness, and peace with the Christian Faith. Athanasius, after many ' hairbreadth 'scapes,' having been concealed in a dry cistern for some time, again found refuge among the hermits of the desert, who conveyed him to more inaccessible retreats whenever the bloodhound sagacity of the Arians discovered his tracks. From the desert, at this time, came forth many of his best works, for his indomitable Christian energy could not permit him to bury his talent, laid up in the napkin of a convent cell, and sometimes he issued forth in disguise, and passing the seas, traversed again the remotest regions of the West, to confirm the faith of the widely scattered Churches. His own words prove his personal, though concealed, presence at the Church-councils of Seleucia and Rimini, when his Arian opponents were amazed at the unlooked for opposition, and believed him deep buried in the Egyptian desert.

Meanwhile bishop Liberius, with the practical wisdom so characteristic of the Romans, became sensible of the injury inflicted on his own *prestige* by his condemnation of Athanasius, so he retracted it ; and at once recovered his popularity throughout Christendom. The Arian Emperor saw the importance of attaching the bishop of Rome to his party, in this deadly struggle with Athanasius, so his chief minister, Eusebius, appeared in Rome to negotiate the alliance, bearing with him rich presents and a letter from the Emperor. Liberius coldly answered, that the Church of Rome having solemnly declared Athanasius guiltless, he could not condemn him, and that a Council of the Church, from which the Emperor, his officers, and all the Arian prelates should

be excluded, could alone reverse the decree. Eusebius threatened, but in vain ; he laid down the Emperor's gifts in the Church of St. Peter, but Liberius ordered them to be cast forth, and uttered a solemn curse against all Arian heretics. Constantine in his wrath ordered the seizure of his rebellious subject, but a strong party in Rome rose in his defence. The city was surrounded by troops, the bishop was secretly apprehended and carried away by night to the Emperor at Milan. The bishop confronted Constantius, and to the taunt that he was in correspondence with the excommunicated traitor Athanasius, undauntedly replied, 'If I were the only friend of Athanasius, I would adhere to the righteous cause.' Liberius was banished to desolate Thrace ; and scornfully rejected the money offered to him by the Emperor for his expenses on the way. 'Let him keep it to pay his soldiers.' To the officer who repeated the offer, he sternly replied, 'Do you, who have wasted all the Churches of the world, presume to offer me alms as if to a criminal ? Away, first become a Christian.' But two years' exile in that barbarous region, and the disastrous news that the Emperor had established in his vacant see the semi-Arian bishop Felix, broke the proud spirit of Liberius ; he consented to sign the semi-Arian creed of Sirmium, and to renounce Athanasius.

Constantius just then indulged his pride and curiosity in a visit to the ancient capital. He proceeded from Milan to Rome along the Æmilian and Flaminian Ways ; and as soon as he approached within forty miles of the city, the march of a prince who had never vanquished a foreign enemy assumed all the appearance of a triumphal procession. His splendid train was quite Oriental, composed of all the ministers of luxury ; but in a time of profound peace, it was strange to see him encompassed by the glittering arms of the numerous squadrons of his guards and cuirassiers, whose

streaming banners of silk, embossed with gold, and shaped in the form of dragons, waved round the person of the Emperor. Constantius sat alone in a lofty car, resplendent with gold and precious gems; and except when he bowed his head to pass under the gates of the cities, he affected a stately demeanour of inflexible, or insensible gravity. So thoroughly Persian had the discipline of the Imperial court become, and such were the habits of diplomatic dissimulation which it inculcated, that during the slow and sultry march, he was never seen to disturb his gravity by even moving his hand towards his face, or by turning his eyes either to the right or the left. When he was received by the Senate and magistrates, he surveyed with attention, but without giving expression to a word, the shadows of the civil honours of the republic, and the consular images of the noble families. The streets were lined with an innumerable multitude, and whilst their repeated acclamations expressed their joy at beholding, after an absence of thirty-two years, the sacred person of their Sovereign, Constantius merely expressed his affected surprise that the human race should thus suddenly be collected on the same spot. He was lodged in the ancient palace of Augustus; presided in the Senate; harangued the people in a few set phrases, from the tribunal which Cicero had so often rendered vocal with his eloquence; assisted with freezing ceremony at the games of the Circus; and haughtily, as if his right, accepted the crowns of gold, as well as the fulsome panegyrics, presented by the deputies of the different cities. His short visit of thirty days was employed in viewing the monuments of art and power which were scattered over the seven hills and the interjacent valleys. He admired, in his languid fashion, the awful majesty of the Capitol, the vast extent of the baths of Caracalla and Diocletian, the severe simplicity of the Pantheon, the massy

greatness of the Coliseum, the elegant architecture of the Theatre of Pompey and the Temple of Peace, and the stately structure of the Forum and Column of Trajan. He even deigned to say, that the voice of Fame, so prone to invent and to magnify, had made an inadequate report of the majesty of Rome; promised to add to its wonders by the gift of an Egyptian obelisk, in addition to those with which Augustus and his successors had already embellished the metropolis of the world, as the most durable monuments of their power and victory. A vessel of uncommon strength and capacity was accordingly provided to convey one of those obelisks, of an enormous weight of granite—for it was at least one hundred and fifteen feet in length—from the banks of the Nile to those of the Tiber, and it was elevated, by the efforts of art and labour, in the great Circus of Rome.

Just before the Emperor's departure, a procession of Roman ladies, in their richest attire, marched along the admiring streets; stood before the Imperial presence, and by their fearless pertinacity obtained an edict for the release of Liberius; but it decreed that he and Felix should rule with conjoint authority each over his respective followers. Athanasius calls this first of all the long line of Anti-popes, 'a monster, raised by the malice of Anti-Christ, worthy of his partisans, and fit to execute their worst designs.' But Dean Milman points out that this very Felix has somehow stolen into the Roman Calendar, and figures there as saint, and pope, and martyr; and stranger still that the Creed of Athanasius has ever since been resolutely maintained by the Roman pontiffs, and proudly set forth as their own inalienable spiritual heir-loom, and the foundation of their claim to *infallibility*, although both the pope and the Anti-pope had alike signed the semi-Arian creed and rejected that of Athanasius! When the Emperor's edict was read in the Circus—uncongenial as the place and

its associations were—some exclaimed, ‘What! because we have two factions here, distinguished by their colours, are we to have two factions in the Church?’ The whole audience then broke forth in an overwhelming shout, ‘One God! one Christ! one Bishop!’ Liberius returned to Rome; and the people thronged forth, as of old, to meet some triumphal consul on his return from exile.

Felix fled before his face; but on his return at the head of his armed followers, a murderous conflict ensued—the streets, the baths, the very churches, ran blood. Felix was expelled, and Liberius sank back into such obscurity, that during the short reign of Julian the Apostate both Rome and its bishop seem to have been utterly forgotten.

JULIAN has, perhaps, been somewhat unfairly branded with the ill-sounding name of Apostate, for his early education had been, it might almost appear, studiously and skillfully conducted, so as to show the brighter side of paganism, the darker of Christianity. His infant years had been clouded by the murder of his father;—from childhood to the age of fifteen his existence seemed forgotten, but he was learning valuable lessons in the school of adversity, and from his tutor Mardonius,—who, born a Scythian, and educated in Greece, united the manly spirit of his ruder ancestors with the elegance of Grecian accomplishments,—he imbibed a passion for the poetry of Homer and the philosophy of Plato, with a sovereign contempt for the licentious or frivolous pleasures of Oriental life, especially those of the theatre and the bath. At fifteen his existence was remembered by the Emperor, so he was shut up, with his brother Gallus, in Macellæ, a fortress of Asia Minor, to be subjected to the austerities of ascetic ecclesiastics—such as the midnight vigil, the fast, the long and weary visits to the tombs of martyrs, which, especially with Arians, had now superseded

a wise and rational instruction in the Holy Scriptures, and a judicious familiarity with the originality, the beauty, and the depth of the Christian faith and morals. For six years he and his brother were detained in this prison, reduced to the debasing society of slaves, and deprived of every sort of instruction. At the age of twenty he was summoned to Constantinople, where his popular demeanour, sober manners and reputation for high talents excited the jealousy of the weak and worthless Constantius, who despatched him to Nicomedia, where the pagan philosopher Libanius was delivering lectures, equally celebrated for their eloquence and their subtle advocacy of Modern Platonism. Julian obtained his writings, which he devoured with all the delight of a stolen enjoyment; secretly formed an intimate acquaintance with Libanius and his partisans; was privately initiated into the pagan ceremonies; and easily evaded the efforts of the Arian bishop Aetius to keep him in the unchristian Christianity of his cruel uncle. He was next removed to Athens, where he was highly distinguished by his talents; and when his brother Gallus fell a victim to the jealousy of Constantius, Julian's life was spared and he was even elevated to the rank of Cæsar by the interference of the humane Empress, who represented him as that harmless unambitious being 'a mere scholar,' whose allegiance and gratitude might be secured by the gift of the purple, and who was qualified to fill a subordinate station, without disputing the commands or shading the glories of his benefactor and sovereign. So he was summoned to the Imperial palace at Milan; and the ceremony of shaving his beard, with his awkward demeanour, when he exchanged his philosopher's cloak for the military habit of a Roman prince, amused for a few days Constantius and his courtiers.

The Emperors no longer deigned to consult with the Senate

in the choice of a colleague ; but sought the ratification of their nomination by the consent of the army. So Constantius introduced his cousin Julian to the troops in a set speech, at the close of which the soldiers, as a token of applause, clashed their shields against their knees ; whilst the officers paid him homage. After his marriage with the Emperor's sister Helena, Julian was despatched to Gaul, which had been invaded by numerous swarms of the fierce German Alemanni, and their more northern barbarians, who assumed and earned the honourable name of Franks, or Freemen. The retired scholastic education, in which he had been more conversant with books than with arms, with the dead than the living, left him in profound ignorance of the practical arts of war and government ; and when he awkwardly repeated some military exercise, which it was necessary for him to learn, he used to exclaim with a sigh, ' O Plato, Plato, what a task for a philosopher !'

And yet Julian's brave and skilful generalship, during the following six years, effectually recovered Gaul, and proved him to possess the genius of Ancient Rome as well as of Ancient Greece. His favourite winter residence was Lutetia—or Paris as it was afterwards called after the Celtic tribe that inhabited it—which was then a small town confined to the island in the midst of the Seine, and accessible only by two wooden bridges. A dense forest overspread the northern side of the Seine, but on the south, the ground which now bears the name of the University, was insensibly covered with houses, and adorned with a palace and amphitheatre, baths, an aqueduct, and a field of Mars for the exercise of the Roman troops. He observed that the severity of the climate was so tempered by the neighbourhood of the ocean, that the vine and fig-tree could be cultivated, though the Seine was deeply frozen in severe winters, and

the huge pieces of ice that floated down the stream might be compared to the blocks of white marble which were extracted from the quarries of Phrygia. He often afterwards sorrowfully contrasted the severe and simple manners of his 'dear Lutetia, where the amusements of the theatre were unknown and despised,' with the corruption and licentiousness of Antioch. If he could now revisit the luxurious capital of France, though he might relish the society of many philosophers as perfectly pagan as himself, would he excuse the lively and graceful follies, not to call them by a harder name, which constitute the existence rather than the enjoyment of its people?

Julian was at Paris when the army obliged him to accept the purple, on hearing of their favourite General's being deprived of his command by the jealous Constantius, whose timely death alone prevented the deadly warfare, in which the last of the race of Constantine were about to contest the Empire. No sooner did the new Emperor set out at the head of his army for Constantinople, than he proclaimed himself a pagan, and the great mass of his troops followed his example. All along his line of march the pagan temples resumed their ancient rites; he adorned them with offerings; he set their worshippers the example of costly sacrifices; and threw his whole energies, with all the power of the sole master of the Roman world, into one gigantic effort for the extinction of Christianity, and the elevation of paganism into a rational and effective faith.

In his still existing writings we can see that the religion which this last professedly pagan Emperor laboured to substitute for Christianity was the eclectic new Platonic Philosophy, viz. : The one immaterial inconceivable Father dwelt alone, though his majesty was held in reverence, the direct and material object of worship was the great *Sun*, the living,



animated, propitious, and beneficent image of the immaterial Father. Below this primal Deity and his glorious image, there was room for all the gods and goddesses of Ancient Greece and Rome, and of all other nations, of whom, in like manner, the *Stars* were the material representatives as well as their images; but who possessed invisible powers, and manifested themselves in various ways, in dreams and visions, through prodigies and oracles, the flights of birds, and the signs presented by the entrails of the victims offered in sacrifice in their temples. He falls back to the dubious and hesitating language of the ancient philosophers on the immortality of the soul. 'I am not,' he says, 'one of those who disbelieve the immortality of the soul; but the gods alone can know; man can only conjecture that *secret*.' But his best consolation on the loss of his friends was the saying of the Grecian philosopher to Darius, that 'if he could find three persons who had not suffered the like calamities, he would restore his beautiful wife to life.'

Julian so entirely misapprehended Christianity as to attribute its success and influence to the skilful organisation of its ministry and its benevolent institutions, rather than to its internal spiritual influence over the soul of man. So he applied himself to the Herculean task of transforming the whole pagan priesthood, whether attached to the dissolute worship of the East, the elegant ceremonial of Greece or the graver ritual of Ancient Romanism, into a serious, highly moral, and blameless sacerdotal order of which he was to be at once the supreme head, and model, as Supreme Pontiff. They were to be sober, chaste, temperate in all things, and were never to be seen in the public festivals where women were permitted to mingle, for they were to be rigid aspirants to the high virtue of New Platonism. They were to conform to a sort of universal ritual and three times a day to offer

public prayer in all the temples to the gods, calling in the powerful aid of music, 'of which the influence is so elevating to the soul,' to impress the minds of the worshippers, and each temple was to have its organised band of choristers who were to follow a regular system of alternate chanting, according to the alternately responding chorus of the ancient Greek music. Solemn silence was to reign in all the temples, except during public worship, in order to invest them with the commanding majesty with which the Christians revered their churches. The pagan priests were to surpass the generosity of the Christians in almsgiving, and to exercise the most prodigal hospitality, after the example recorded by Homer of the Ancient Greeks; they were to associate with paganism all the hospitals and other charitable institutions of the Christians; and whilst urging the people to liberal sacrifices of oxen, &c., to the gods, they were to remind them that mutual love was the offering most acceptable to their altars. Schoolmasters, catechists, preachers, were to teach the doctrines of New Platonism to enable the people to purify their minds and bodies so as to attain the virtue needful for participation in the pagan mysteries. Of all homage to the Gospel this was the most impressive and sincere, and we are astonished at the blindness of Julian in not perceiving that these improvements in paganism, which he borrowed so evidently from Christianity, and which so irresistibly enforced his admiration, were the genuine and permanent beneficial results of the Gospel, attesting its heavenly origin because unknown to mankind till its proclamation. The Christians saw this instinctively, and called the Emperor 'the ape of Christianity.'

Like our James II., Julian began his first direct attack upon Christianity by an edict of universal toleration, thus depriving the orthodox Christians of the Imperial protection,

and plunging them into such internal feuds with sectarians as might rend and destroy the Church. He did not perceive that it was now too late to reassume the old philosophic contempt for the obscure and foreign religion, and under the smooth mask of pity for 'those poor, blind, misguided Galileans,' his bitter and scornful hostility to them appears, incessantly, in his conduct and even in his edicts. When those exiled sectarians, the Arians, Donatists, &c., had returned to Constantinople, determining to expose them to a sort of disgraceful intellectual gladiatorship, he caused them to discuss their differences in his presence, and presided with mock solemnity over their debates. His own voice was drowned in the clamour, till at length, as if to contrast them to their disadvantage with the wily barbarian warriors with whom he had been engaged, 'Hear me,' he exclaimed, 'the Franks and the Alemanni have heard me, but no wild beasts are so savage and intractable as Christian sectaries.' Athanasius, at the publication of the edict of toleration, had returned to Alexandria, and was quietly exercising his office; but Julian, who knew and dreaded his genius and courage, wrote to the præfect of Egypt—'I swear by the great Serapis, that unless, on the Calends of December, Athanasius has departed from Alexandria, nay from Egypt, the officers of your government shall pay a fine of one hundred pounds of gold. You know my temper; I am slow to condemn, but I am still slower to forgive.' He added a postscript with his own hand—'The contempt that is shown for the gods fill me with grief and indignation. There is nothing that I should see, nothing that I should hear, with more pleasure, than the expulsion of Athanasius from all Egypt. The abominable wretch! Under my reign, the baptism of several Grecian ladies of the highest rank has been the effect of his persecutions.' The archbishop peacefully retired to the desert, and lived long

after the fall of the prince who, in words of deadly import, had publicly declared his wish 'that the whole venom of the Galilean School were contained in the single person of Athanasius.'

From all quarters pagan philosophers and priests, diviners and magicians now crowded Julian's court, wretches whom Chrysostom describes as branded with every crime, as infamous for poisonings, and grown old in prisons and in the mines; and they excited the Emperor to direct persecution of the Christians, by edicts commanding the confiscation of their goods, to reduce them 'to their becoming and boasted poverty for wealth, according to their admirable law, prevents them from attaining the kingdom of heaven.' He even insultingly prohibited their professors of rhetoric from laying their profane hands on Homer and Plato, saying, 'Let them be content to explain Matthew and Luke in the Churches of the Galileans.'

Christians in that age considered the final destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem to be the fulfilment of one of the chief prophecies which prove the Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures. Three hundred long years had now elapsed since the Roman ploughshare had been drawn over the consecrated ground, as a sign of perpetual interdiction and desolation; and, in all their contests with Jews or pagans, Christians pointed to the deserted ruins on Mount Sion as their crowning proof of the Divine Mission of the SAVIOUR. So Julian, at once to demolish one of the firmest foundations of the Christians' faith, and to enlist the Jews in his deadly struggle with them, announced his determination to restore the Temple in its pristine beauty; and summoned all the Jews of the Empire 'to the Work.' The desire of rebuilding the Temple has in every age been the ruling passion of the Jews; so at the Emperor's call they awoke from their long

slumber of debasement and despondency ; they flocked to the holy mountain, of each sex and of every age, to hallow their hands by heaping up the holy earth from the foundations, or hewing the stone to be used in the building ; the men converted their wealth into pick-axes, shovels, and spades of silver for the pious work. The women transported the rubbish in mantles of silk and purple.

Julian advanced funds from the public treasury ; despatched his favourite minister Alypius to expedite the affair ; and commanded the governor of Palestine to spare nothing on a work in which he took the deepest personal interest. As for the Jews, each hour increased their zeal, every purse was opened, every hand engaged in the work ; the commands of the monarch of the Roman world were executed by the passionate enthusiasm of a whole people.

Yet the joint efforts of the greatest power and most vehement enthusiasm failed to annul the Divine decree, and the ground of the Jewish Temple, which is now desecrated by an enormous Mahomedan mosque, still continued to exhibit the same awful spectacle of ruin and desolation. Christian contemporary writers tell us, that in this memorable contest the honour of the Gospel was vindicated by a miraculous earthquake, whirlwind, and fiery eruption, which overcame the obstinate zeal of the Jews, again and again, till they cast away their implements with groans of anguish, and abandoned the work in shame and sorrow, as expressly forbidden by JEHOVAH. The pagan historian Ammianus thus describes this extraordinary event :—‘ Whilst Alypius, assisted by the governor of the province, urged with vigour and diligence the execution of the work, horrible balls of fire, breaking out near the foundation, with frequent and reiterated attacks, rendered the place, from time to time, inaccessible to the scorched and blasted workmen ; and the victorious element

continuing in this manner obstinately and resolutely bent, as it were, to drive them to a distance, the undertaking was abandoned.' How different was the scene on Mount Moriah when Solomon's Temple peacefully arose under the approving smile of Heaven !—In Bishop Heber's expressive lines—

'No hammers there, no ponderous axes rung;  
Like some tall palm the noiseless fabric sprung.'

The rest of Julian's short reign would almost argue him to be given over to judicial blindness, so strongly is it at variance with the intellectual ability visible in his writings, and the skilful generalship which won him so many victories in the field. The Persian King, on hearing of the accession of an Emperor of such prowess, had sent ambassadors respectfully to offer Julian favourable terms of peace. They received the stern reply, that he would never consent to hold a peaceful conference among the flames and ruins of the cities of Mesopotamia, which their master had desolated; and he added, with a smile of contempt, that it was needless to treat by ambassadors, as he himself had determined to visit speedily the court of Persia. What were his preparations for this deadly struggle with Rome's most formidable foe? Such lavish sacrifices to his gods as excited the ridicule even of the pagans themselves. Every morning and evening he sacrificed to the sun; he rose at night to pay the same homage to the moon and stars. He was constantly prostrate before the images of Jupiter, Mars, and the Queen of Heaven, or busying himself with cleaving the wood, or kindling the fire on their altars with his own breath, till such multitudes of victims were consumed, that it was said his return from Persia would find oxen altogether exterminated. When Maris, the blind old bishop of Chalcedon, rebuked this second Jeroboam; 'Peace,' retorted the Emperor, 'blind old man,

thy Galilean God will not restore thine eye-sight.'—'I thank my God,' was the reply of his faithful reprover, 'for my blindness, which spares me the pain of beholding an apostate like thee.' Then, instead of advancing rapidly against the enemy, Julian loitered at Antioch, where Christians abounded, who, during the license of the revived Saturnalia—when by old Roman custom every man might speak his mind—made the streets re-echo with songs, deriding the laws, the religion, the personal conduct, and even the philosopher's *beard* of their new Emperor; who in his turn composed a clever book, entitled 'Misopogon,' or the *Enemy of the Beard*, in which he ironically confessed his own faults and severely satirized the people of Antioch. His march into the territories of the Great King seemed a succession of victories; but the Persians were luring him on to his ruin; blind to their wiles, he burnt his fleet, and advanced into the heart of their country, till, separated from his resources, his troops began to suffer all the misery of famine. Reluctantly he commenced a disastrous retreat, through sandy deserts, oppressed with intolerable heat, and suffering dreadfully from the light skirmishing warfare waged against him by clouds of swift Arabian cavalry. So intense was his painful anxiety, that whenever he closed his eyes in short snatches of broken slumber, visions of terror tormented his troubled spirit. Once he was horror-stricken by the apparition of the Genius of the Empire, clothed in rags, covering with funeral veil his head and his horn of abundance, and slowly retiring from the Imperial tent. The Emperor started from his couch, and stepping forth to refresh his wearied spirits with the coolness of the midnight air, he beheld a fiery meteor, which shot athwart the sky and suddenly vanished. Julian,—like the notorious Lord Herbert of Cherbury and other infidels,—while rejecting God's revelation to 'holy men of old,' foolishly fancied that He

would reveal His will to themselves, 'despisers of His Word' though they were; so he regarded the dream as a message from heaven, and, in terrible trepidation, instantly summoned a council of war. The general opinion was that he was to avoid an engagement on that day; but, as the officers were dispersing, day broke heavily, the trumpets sounded, and, as Julian suddenly rushed from his tent, to beat off a troop of Persians who insolently assailed his quarters, a javelin pierced his unguarded breast. It is said that his last words were 'O Galilean, thou hast conquered!'

JOVIAN, an old and popular officer, was immediately proclaimed Emperor by the troops, and, after some severe conflicts with the Persians, concluded a treaty neither advantageous nor honourable, but needful for the preservation of the wreck of the army. He was a Christian; and his first acts were the restoration of the Cross to the imperial standard and the revocation of all Julian's decrees in favour of Paganism. The Eastern army contained many Christians whom Julian had been unable to induce to apostatize; but they admired his great military talents and respected him as an honourable foe to their religion, because he had the honesty and manhood to declare himself its open enemy; and the ability to devise another religion, such as it was, and to present it to them in place of that which he desired to destroy. Christianity has only to fear those cowardly traitors in its own camp, who are

'Willing to wound and yet afraid to strike,  
Just hint a fault, and hesitate dislike.'

So they carried the corpse of the last of the Constantines in a slow march of fifteen days to Tarsus in Cilicia, 'no mean city,' for it was the birth-place of the Apostle Paul, and there they raised over it a stately tomb, on the banks of



the cold and limpid Cydnus; Christians and pagans alike mingling their tears over their hero's ashes.

VALENTINIAN was one of the officers who had withdrawn from the army rather than offer even questionable adoration to standards decorated with the symbols of idolatry; and he was unanimously elected Emperor, upon the sudden death of Jovian soon after his accession. He divided the Empire with his brother Valens, giving him the Eastern territories, and retaining the Western for himself. The new Emperor established his court at Milan, as nearer the centre of his dominions than Rome; and his reign of eleven years was chiefly engaged in hostilities with the wild and warlike German tribes who were constantly invading his dominions.

Gratian, his eldest son, succeeded to the throne, and associated with himself his brother, Valentinian II. The Roman bishop Liberius died at this crisis, and the feud which had long smouldered between his faction and that of Felix, broke out in fatal fury at Rome, where churches were garrisoned, besieged, and deluged with blood. All those great offices of the ancient Republic, the senatorship, the quæstorship, and consulship, had now become mere shadows of departed greatness, and were quietly conferred by the Emperor, who rarely condescended to visit Rome. But the bishopric was now the office of chief dignity and emolument there; and all the old competition for the highest honour in the Republic was revived. Damasus and Ursicinus were the rival bishops who convulsed Rome by their guilty ambition, the former as the successor of the Arian Felix, the latter of Liberius. Damasus marched at the head of his following of clergy, grave-diggers, charioteers, and hired gladiators, and was met so fiercely by his rival, that one hundred and thirty-seven corpses strewed the basilica of Sisinnius. Nor did the contention cease with the first discomfiture and banishment of Ursicinus; he was

more than once recalled, exiled, again set up as a rival bishop, and re-exiled. Another frightful massacre took place in the Church of St. Agnes. Some years elapsed before Damasus was in undisputed possession of his bishopric, and then only by aid of the pagan præfect of the city. 'No wonder,' says the pagan historian Ammianus, 'that for so magnificent a prize as the bishopric of Rome men should contend with the utmost eagerness and obstinacy. To be enriched by the lavish donations of noble matrons; to ride splendidly attired in a stately chariot; to sit at a profuse, luxurious, more than imperial table—these are the rewards of successful ambition. How much more rationally would those proud pontiffs consult their true happiness, if, instead of alleging the greatness of the city as an excuse for their pride, they would imitate the exemplary life of some provincial bishops whose temperance and sobriety, whose mean apparel and humble downcast looks, recommend their pure and modest virtue to the Deity and His true worshippers.'

The celebrated Jerome was at that time secretary to the bishop Damasus, and requires a passing notice. He was born at Stridon, an obscure town of Pannonia; and his thirst for learning brought him to Rome, where he studied under the learned Donatus. After his baptism he set out on his travels, and in Treves and other towns delivered lectures upon the Scriptures. He was ordained in Antioch, but refused to unite with any church, wandering at length into a desert in Syria, where he became fascinated by the *lone* life of the monks, suited as it was to his solitary studies. Quarrelling with his strange companions, he retired to a cell at Bethlehem, in order to familiarize himself with the language and peculiar habits of the sacred writers; hoping by severe study of Hebrew that he might mortify that taste for the great writers of Greece and Rome which he had begun to

consider amongst his sinful indulgences. Cicero and Plato had been the companions of all his wanderings, and although he fasted before he opened their pages, yet his conscientious scruples recurred so often, in his monotonous and gloomy retreat, that he fell into a brain fever, of which one terrible vision never left his distempered fancy. He thus describes it—'Methought I beheld myself before the throne of the great Judge, and before its brightness dared not lift mine eyes. "Who art thou?" demanded the awful voice. "A Christian," answered I tremblingly. "'Tis false," sternly replied the voice, "Thou art no Christian, thou art a *Ciceronian*. Where the treasure is, there is the heart also." ' Henceforth, by dint of scourging himself severely, pagan authors lost their fascinations for Jerome, though much of their eloquence as well of their sarcastic point survived in his own writings, and constitute their chief charm.

Bitter controversy with his brother monks drove him back to Rome, and one of his familiar letters to the nun Eustochium gives a startling picture of the vices of the Roman clergy. The Roman fop of former days, too delicate forsooth to wear a winter ring in summer, or sleep on a couch ruffled by a rose-leaf, revives in his lively sketch of the clerical coxcomb—'His whole care is his dress, that it be well perfumed, that his feet may not slip about in loose sandals; his hair is crisped with a curling pin; his fingers glitter with rings; he walks on tip-toe lest he should splash himself with the wet soil. When you see him you would think him a bridegroom rather than a clergyman—these are priests of Baal.' The old Roman Cynic philosopher also finds himself represented amongst Jerome's ecclesiastics. 'Those whom you see with hair like women, beards like goats, a black cloak, and bare feet—avoid them; all these things are marks of the devil. Of such were Antimus and Sophronius, who entered noble houses and

deceived silly women laden with sins.' The old Roman parasite comes also to life again in Jerome's pages, decked out in Christian garb—'There is one whom I must sketch, that knowing the master you may recognize the scholars. He rises early and hastens to his work; visits people scarcely awake and intrudes himself almost into their bed-chambers. If he sees a cushion, a handsome table-cover, or other piece of furniture, he approves of it, is struck by it, handles it, and laments that he does not possess such a thing himself; and so rather extorts than fairly obtains it; for the women all fear to offend the great man of the city.' The legacy-hunters, whose scandalous mendicancy had already called forth a stringent law, are condemned by Jerome 'as possessing riches under a poor Christ which they had not under a wealthy and deceitful devil.'

And yet Jerome exercised a most baneful influence over the Roman Church, by his extravagant praise of celibacy and his contemptuous rage against marriage. It was in his solitary and studious cell at Bethlehem that he fell into the old ascetic, philosophic, and pagan contempt of marriage; and that he began to exalt celibacy as the highest dignity, and the highest holiness of humanity. He tells us 'that on his first arrival in Rome, in the year 360, none of the noble women there knew anything about Monachism, nor did they venture, on account of the novelty of the thing, to assume a name then reckoned base and ignominious.' But the magic spell of his eloquence; his exaltation of virginity as the crowning merit; his curious felicity in making all other failings invisible under the dazzling veil of that great loveliness, soon attracted crowds of female proselytes, of whom some were the most illustrious matrons, widows, and virgins in Rome. Marcella, a wealthy widow of one of the oldest Patrician families, was the first of his votaries, and her ex-

ample made his strange system all the fashion in Rome. Her rich sister Paula soon embraced the new discipline with her daughters Eustochium and Blesilla. The latter, a beautiful widow at the age of twenty, scornfully rejected all persuasions to a second marriage, and submitted herself to such cruel fastings and macerations, under Jerome's guidance, that she speedily sunk into an early grave. All Rome took an indignant interest in her sad story, and her mother became an object of popular reprobation from her unnatural conduct to her lovely child. Jerome was publicly denounced as her murderer, and at her funeral a loud cry burst from the excited multitude, 'Why do we tolerate these accursed monks? Away with them, stone them! Cast them into the Tiber!'

Jovinian, Helvidius, and others of the Roman clergy took advantage of this popular outbreak to enter the lists of controversy with Jerome. In the name of nature, of common sense, and of the Word of God, they denied this inherent perfection of celibacy, as contrasted with holy wedlock. But Jerome hardened himself more than ever into stoical severity. The stern monk who could scourge his bleeding back, until he 'had whipped the offending Adam out of him'—his delight in the pagan writers of old renown,—spared not the controversial lash upon his adversaries. He assailed them with contemptuous rage and savage satire, scornfully branded them as heretics and lovers of inglorious ease, and reduced them to silence by strange perversions of Holy Scripture, such as the unclean beasts going into the ark by pairs, the clean by sevens! The hundred bearing seed no longer, as in Apostolic days, represented the faithful and fruitful hearer of the Word; nor as in Cyprian's days did it personify the ardent aspirant to martyrdom, for Jerome boldly applied the thirty-fold to marriage, the sixty-fold to widowhood, and the hundred-fold to the crown of virginity! Even whilst

admitting that St. Peter was a married man, he comforts himself by the recollection that a married Apostle had not written the Apocalypse! He reluctantly admits that a virgin and her mother *may* be both in heaven, but glories in the idea that one would be a bright and the other a dim star! His utmost concession to marriage, made in his mildest moments, was, 'I love to praise marriage, because it supplies us with virgins; of those thorns we gather these roses.' And yet he could, without seeing the mischievous result of his system, thus describe his Roman nuns to Eustochium—'Their weak point is their love of praise; there are very few of them free from this. Some of them go abroad with disfigured faces that they may appear to men to fast, though within, where men see not, they are surfeited with food. When they see any one approaching, they begin to sigh and look down; then they cover their faces, leaving a peep-hole for one eye; their clothes indeed are ragged; their girdle is of sackcloth, their hands and feet are filthy. Some exchange their dresses for male attire, blush to be the women they were born, cut off their flowing locks, and impudently greet you with an equivocal stare.' There was also much melancholy meaning in his warning to the sisterhood, 'It were better to have walked in the humble paths of low virtue—to have submitted to marrying, than attempting a higher ascent to fall into the depths of hell.' He also admits that the Alexandrian mischief had appeared in Rome, and that 'the high virtue' of a few had resulted in the 'low virtue' of the many professing Christian females, who recklessly sunk into the customs and fashions of the pagans, even 'in painting their cheeks; in dying their hair red—the favourite colour of Roman beauty;—in wearing their hair now dissolved into ringlets, now compressed into unnatural curls, or piled up on the head like a helmet or the boss of a shield. Even aged Christian females were vieing

with the Roman pagan matrons in dyeing their silver-white hair, or in wearing wigs of hair taken from the heads of malefactors.'

But Jerome all the more vehemently pursued his monastic course; he became a kind of confessor; he directed the sacred studies; he overlooked the conduct of numbers of Roman ladies who embraced his ascetic system with astonishing ardour. It is singular, indeed, to contrast the different descriptions of the female aristocracy of Rome, at the various periods of her history. First come the secluded and stern matrons, the Volumnias and Cornelias, employed in household duties, and training with severe discipline, for the military and civil service of the State, her future consuls and dictators. Next appear, sunk in the gorgeous luxury and the almost incredible profligacy of the later days of the Republic and the Empire, the Julias and Messalinas, so darkly coloured by the historians of the times as to be scarcely human. And now we behold with wonder the Marcellas and Paulas, matrons of the same race and city, forswearing all intercourse with men, devoting their wealth to pious uses, and their days to the most stern austerities. More surprising still, the female converts of Jerome burned with zeal to follow their teacher to the Holy Land, attracted thither by his glowing description of its religious wonders. Jerome describes, with great pride, Paula setting out on her pilgrimage, after having 'spoiled' her infant son Toxotius and marriageable daughter Rufina of their vast wealth, and bestowed it on the Church. He pictures her deserted children watching, with entreating looks, her departure; and he glories in the self-sacrificing spirit with which she does not even turn her head away to hide her maternal tears, but lifts up her unmoistened eyes to heaven, and departs on her weary road. He praises her most of all that, at her death, she did not leave a penny to her daughter, but only a load of debts!

Amidst such corruptions of Christianity in Rome, we wonder not to find Ancient Romanism as rampant as ever. To the stranger, Rome still offered all the appearances of a pagan city; it contained one hundred and fifty-two pagan temples, and one hundred and eighty shrines sacred to their tutelary gods, and reeking with idolatrous incense, under the protection of the Præfect of the city, who was usually a pagan. Above all still towered the Capitol, in its unassailed and awful majesty, with its fifty shrines, bearing the most sacred names in the religious and civil records of Rome, those of Jupiter, of Mars, of Janus, of Romulus, and of Cæsar. The Emperor still bore the title of Supreme Pontiff; the Consuls, before they entered upon their office, still ascended the Capitol; pagan processions still passed along the crowded streets; and the people still thronged to the pagan festivals and theatres.

GRATIAN was only sixteen at his accession, and his brother VALENTINIAN an infant. So Paganism flourished in security during the opening years of their reign, the Roman bishop giving no opposition to its aggressions. But Archbishop Ambrose, of Milan, as his powerful mind obtained an influence over the youthful Emperor, caused such a change in the Imperial policy as struck terror into the heart of Paganism. This celebrated champion of the Church was born at Treves, and his father had for many years ruled Gaul as Prætorian Præfect. Whilst pursuing his studies at Rome, his ability and conduct attracted the favour of Probus, the Prætorian Præfect of Italy, who placed him over the provinces of Æmelia and Liguria, with the parting and prophetic charge, 'Rule the provinces not as a judge, but as a bishop.' Milan was the chief city of his department, and from the superiority of its schools, it had begun almost to rival or eclipse Rome, as 'the Athens of the West.' The Church there was rent by



divisions, and at the death of Archbishop Auxentius a violent contest arose for the appointment of his successor. Ambrose appeared to allay the tumult, and spoke so eloquently, wisely, and piously, that a general shout suddenly broke forth, 'Ambrose be Bishop! Ambrose be Bishop!' He was yet young, only a candidate for baptism, and attempted, by assuming the severe character of a magistrate, and by flight, to elude the unexpected and unwished-for dignity. But the ardour of the people, and the approbation of the Emperor, compelled him to accept the archbishopric; and he exercised the office with all the vigorous, practical, and statesman-like ability of his civil character as a Roman magistrate, curiously contrasting with the vehement eloquence and mystic subtlety peculiar to the Christian writers of his day; whilst his severe simplicity of life and boundless benevolence were as strangely opposed to the pomp and majesty of his former rank as representing the Emperor. His fame was soon spread throughout Italy by the magnificent sums which he expended on the redemption of slaves. He even devoted the ornaments and golden vessels of the Churches to this work of mercy, saying, 'The Church possesses gold not to treasure up, but to distribute it for the welfare and happiness of men. The blood of Redemption which has gleamed in those golden cups has sanctified them, not for the service alone, but for the Redemption of men.' And yet the Service of the Sanctuary was conducted by Ambrose with unrivalled solemnity and grandeur. He cultivated sacred music with the utmost care; the *Te Deum* and most of the Latin hymns upon which modern Romanism plumes itself, and which it claims as its own, have been attributed to Ambrose himself; and the Church of Milan was long celebrated for the grave dignity and full harmony of the Ambrosian Chant. It was Ambrose that first introduced into

the West the Antiphonal Chanting, in which the different sides of the choir answered each other in responsive verses, which were then re-echoed by the mingled voices of all ranks, ages, and sexes, which Ambrose compared 'to the glad sound of many waters.' The strong resemblance which the Ambrosian Chant bears to the chorus of the Greek tragedy, makes it probable that Ambrose adorned the simple music borrowed by the Primitive Church from Judaism, by engrafting on it some of the lofty religious harmonies of Paganism. Certain it is that its melody was so enrapturing that the sensitive conscience of the young Augustine took alarm, lest when he wept at the solemn music, he should be yielding to the luxury of sweet sounds, rather than imbibing the devotional spirit of the hymn.

Ambrose almost equalled Athanasius in able and inflexible advocacy of the Divinity of the SAVIOUR; and his elaborate treatise upon that grand doctrine was written for the instruction of the Emperor Gratian, who revered and loved him as a father.

The Roman Senate, taking alarm at Ambrose's growing ascendancy over the young Emperor, sent a solemn embassy to perform the customary ceremonial of officially arraying him with the dignity of the Supreme Pontificate of Paganism. The idolatrous honour was disdainfully rejected by Gratian, who added to their consternation by a decree commanding the image of Victory, which had been restored to the Senate-house by Julian, to be removed from its pedestal with its altar; and ordering that the idolatrous worship paid to it, which had commenced and hallowed all their proceedings for so many centuries, should be forthwith discontinued. A deputation from the Senate, though headed by the eloquent pagan orator Symmachus, failed to change Gratian's decree, which was followed by a law which confiscated at once all the property

of the temples, and swept away all the privileges of the pagan priests, who became mere stipendiaries of the State, the immediate step to their total dissolution.

GRATIAN was proceeding on an expedition in aid of his uncle Valens, the feeble Emperor of the East, along the frontiers of the Alemanni, when intelligence reached him that those barbarians were rising in revolt. Suddenly inclining to the left, he surprised them by his unexpected passage of the Rhine; at the head of his legions climbed the mountains, and pursued the enemy from one retreat to another, till he completely routed them, the gilt and variegated armour of himself and of his guards, displaying by its pierced and shattered condition the fury of their hand-to-hand conflict. But his triumph was turned to consternation by news of the fatal battle of Hadrianople, which equalled in the actual loss, and far surpassed in fatal consequences, the misfortune which Rome had formerly sustained in the fields of Cannæ. Above two-thirds of the Roman army were destroyed, with the Emperor and a great number of brave and distinguished officers; and the pride of the Goths was so elated by their victory, that they poured down in a furious torrent to the suburbs of Constantinople; carrying desolation and ruin along their course. Gratian felt himself unequal to support the sinking Eastern Empire, and transferred the dignity and the danger to THEODOSIUS, a Spanish general, from the same city which gave birth to Trajan and Hadrian, whose exploits quickly justified the choice, and obtained for him the title of 'Great,' by which he is known to the historians of those times.

When Valentinian II. succeeded to the sole Empire of the West, after Gratian was murdered in the year 383, Symmachus—now Præfect of Rome and Prince of the Senate—pleaded the cause of Ancient Romanism with an ability and

eloquence worthy of the palmy days of Roman oratory. Personifying its cause, he introduces Ancient Rome herself thus plaintively but craftily pleading for her existence. 'Princes,' says the venerable matron, 'Fathers of your country! pity and respect my grey hairs, and permit me still to practise the religion of my ancestors, in which I have grown old. Since I do not repent, grant me but the liberty of living according to my ancient usage. This religion has subdued the world to my dominion; these rites repelled Hannibal from my walls, the Gauls from the Capitol. Have I lived thus long, to be rebuked in my old age for my religion? It is too late; it would be discreditable to amend in my old age. I entreat but peace for the gods of Rome, the tutelary gods of our country. . . . Heaven is above us all; we cannot all follow the same path; there are many ways by which we arrive at the great secret. But we presume not to contend; we are humble suppliants.' The orator concludes by appealing to the deified father of the Emperor, 'who looks down with sorrow from the starry citadel, to see that toleration violated which he had maintained with willing justice.'

Whilst bishop Damasus kept a gloomy silence, contenting himself with forwarding a protest from a small minority of the Senate, Archbishop Ambrose confronted the eloquent Symmachus, and in several still existing epistles fortified the Emperors in their antagonism against Ancient Romanism. He justly derides as absurd that reverence for antiquity which could only tend to discourage the improvements of art, and to replunge the human race into their original barbarism. He treats the venerable traditions of Roman glory with contempt. 'How long,' he asks, 'did Hannibal insult the gods of Rome? It was the goose not the deity that saved the Capitol. Did Jupiter speak in the goose? Where were their gods in all the defeats, some of them but recent, of the

pagan Emperors?' Then, gradually rising to a more lofty tone, he asserts the unquestionable obligation of a Christian Sovereign to permit no part of the public revenue to be devoted to the maintenance of idolatry; proves that Christianity alone is the doctrine of salvation, that there can be no compromise between God and Baal, for it is written, 'Man cannot serve two masters.'

Arianism had been promoted in the East with frantic violence by the Emperor Valens; but it had been triumphantly resisted by many bishops, especially by Basil of Cæsarea, Gregory of Nyssa, and Gregory of Nazianzum. Such of these bishops' works as are still extant nobly vindicate the doctrine of the TRINITY; and if in them the wisdom of this world was repelled by the history of the SAVIOUR'S humiliation and sufferings, it was attracted by the promise of the great indwelling SPIRIT, revealed at His resurrection, as a means of communion with the TRI-UNE GOD. But the powerful support which they received from the hermits of the desert, who merely stretched out their necks to the sword when commanded by the soldiers of Valens to embrace Arianism or die, drew forth their enthusiastic recommendation of Monachism. Their familiarity, too, with the Grecian orators of old caused them to cultivate an exaggerated and florid style of eloquence totally at variance with the severe and simple truthfulness of Holy Scripture; and afterwards, when taken literally, quite subversive of Christian truth.

The early Christians of some places, for instance, fondly fancied that the martyrs were engaged in prayer *for* 'the Church militant here on earth'; and, in turn, they prayed *for* the Blessed Virgin and the martyrs, that their 'souls might be refreshed and their glory increased'; though, as Gieseler observes, 'no trace is found of their praying *to* the martyrs or Virgin at all, since the idea was not yet entertained of the'

living being able to make their requests known to the dead.' But Gregory of Nazianzum's eloquent apostrophes to the martyrs, though evidently mere strokes of oratory—like Whitefield's celebrated address to the Angel Gabriel—and though accompanied with the doubt whether they understood what he said, strengthened the growing superstitious veneration for them, and were afterwards perverted into arguments for saint-worship. Just as the rhetorical flourishes of the Eastern Christian orators of the following century on the privilege of approaching the LORD's Table were in the Dark Ages wilfully, or ignorantly, perverted into the monstrous and gainful papal doctrine of Transubstantiation.

After Theodosius, by his valour and policy, had subdued the Goths, and restored peace to the Roman world, he turned to the no less difficult task of producing peace in the Church. His wife Flaccilla was a devoted Christian, who often reminded him of the low condition from which they had been raised by Providence, and of the gratitude they owed to the Giver of their greatness. When the courtiers remonstrated that her frequent visits to the hospitals and to the house of mourning were beneath the imperial dignity, and urged her to content herself with alms-giving, she nobly answered, 'The distribution of gold indeed becomes the imperial dignity; but I offer to HIM, who gave me that dignity, my personal labours as a token of gratitude.' So when Theodosius exhibited an inclination to Arianism, Flaccilla, trembling for his salvation, turned to God for aid; and in a very singular way her prayer was answered. He had elevated his son Arcadius to partnership in the Empire, and on an appointed day the two princes were seated on a stately throne to receive the homage of their subjects. Bishop Amphilochius, of Iconium, approached the throne, and after paying humble homage to his Sovereign, laid his hand on

the royal youth's head, and, stroking it down, accosted him with the same familiar tenderness he might have used towards any poor child of the street. Provoked by this insolence, the monarch commanded the rude priest to be instantly driven from his presence. But while the guards were forcing him to the door the old bishop exclaimed, 'Such is the treatment, O Emperor, which the KING of heaven has prepared for those impious men who affect to worship the Father, but refuse to acknowledge the equal majesty of His Divine SON (John, v. 23). Theodosius immediately saw the force of the illustration, respected the bravery of the good old bishop; affectionately embraced him; investigated the subject; and soon his name became as dear to the orthodox Church as it was terrible to her Arian foes.

Ambrose used to say to his clergy, 'If we must give an account of every idle word, take care, lest you have to answer also for idle silence. Bridle your tongue, lest it be wanton and luxuriant; keep it within banks; a rapidly flowing river soon collects mud. Avoid public banquets made for strangers, and exercise hospitality to them at your own houses. Why do you not employ the time which is free from your clerical duties in reading? Why do you not revisit CHRIST, speak to CHRIST, hear CHRIST? We speak to HIM when we pray; we hear Him, when we read the Divine Oracles. Remember that we have received the ministry to attend on the service of CHRIST, and not to pay court to men.' His own life and, dearer still, his faithfulness to his LORD, were preserved by his steady adherence to those noble principles. The Empress-mother Justina had repeatedly availed herself of Ambrose's offices as an ambassador to the insurgent General Maximus. She had 'with her mouth showed much love;' but, now that the powerful arm of Theodosius had strengthened her throne, she used every

imaginable artifice, every sort of flattery, to induce Ambrose to sanction the grant of a Church to the Arians in Milan. Failing in this, she threatened his life. Ambrose betook himself to the House of Prayer, and to the assembled multitude of Christians used the exhortations with which they had been kept patient and loyal during all the Roman Emperors' persecutions. 'Against arms and soldiers tears and prayers are my arms. Such are the fortifications of a Christian pastor. I neither can nor ought to resist in any other manner. Our Lord Jesus is Almighty; what He commands to be done shall be fulfilled; nor does it become you to resist the Divine sentence.' The prisons were filled with Christians; an immense sum was exacted from them; guards were drawn round the Church, where the bishop had remained in prayer all night, and the people had kept up one constant volume of sacred melody in honour of the TRINITY. The chief courtiers appeared at the Church-door and urged Ambrose to comply with the Emperor's command. Turning to the people Ambrose firmly replied, 'The Holy Spirit has spoken in you this day the answer—"Emperor, we intreat, but we do not fight."' The Archbishop was asked by the Emperor's notary, whether he intended to usurp the Empire. 'I have an empire,' was his magnanimous reply, 'it is true, but it lies in weakness, according to that saying of the Apostle, "When I am weak, then am I strong."'

The arrival in Italy of Theodosius with his iron-clad legions, to defend it from the invasion of the insurgent chieftain Maximus, his subsequent great victory over the enemy, and his manly confession of the Orthodox Faith turned the scale in favour of Ambrose. The young Emperor Valentinian replied to the entreaties of his Arian courtiers that he would confront Ambrose in the Church by the memorable words, 'His eloquence would compel yourselves to lay me,



bound hand and foot before his throne.' Just before his death the young prince sought baptism from Ambrose, with expressions of genuine faith, which rewarded the Archbishop for all his troubles.

The death of the Roman bishop Damasus, in the year 384, is an important æra in the history of those times. Jerome was by almost unanimous consent elected in his room; but the intrigues of Siricius prevailing against his superior claims, he angrily withdrew once more to his cell at Bethlehem; and 'looking on the world from his loop-holes of retreat,' he fulminated ever and anon fresh thunderbolts against Rome, 'that purple-clad harlot Babylon,' whose priesthood and people become blacker and more inexcusable in his harsher and more unsparing denunciation. But he left the indelible impress of Monachism upon the Roman Church, for its austerity and rigid rule were singularly suited to the Roman spirit—naturally so stern, and stoical—and to that iron discipline which survived in all the glorious traditions of Rome's early days, as the gainer of those victories which made the world tremble at the name of Roman citizen. Jerome's famous version of the Bible into Latin, called the Vulgate, also contributed vastly to the adoption of his Celibate System, not merely by the celebrity which it secured to its learned author; but by its superseding the original Hebrew and Greek Scriptures, and finally establishing *Latin* as the language of the Western Church, and thus to this day raising the authority of Rome over all nations whose languages have been chiefly formed from the Latin.

The secret of the wonderful rise of the Roman bishops was in their keen discernment of the popular opinions of the day, their rapid adoption of them, and an incomparable practical ability in turning them to their own account. Thus Siricius astutely adopted Jerome's popular 'idea,' and his first act

was his celebrated *Decretal*, or papal letter, enforcing the Celibacy of the Clergy on all Churches in Communion with Rome. This is the first Authentic Decretal, claiming to be a law to Christendom, and it is the true foundation of the Roman Church's vast system of Ecclesiastical Law. Here too we see the old Roman spirit, in its tendency to harden into inflexible Statute law that which was really a matter left free to the dictates of usage, opinion, or feeling.

The more this memorable decree is considered the more it will appear a master-stroke of Roman policy. It appeared just as the weight of the Roman Church on the side of orthodoxy—though, as Gieseler observes, only that of an *inert mass*—obtained for it the grateful confidence of all Christendom, so lately shaken to its foundations in the Arian Controversy, and, consequently, no offence was taken at the proud attitude of dictator to the universal Church assumed by the Roman bishop. It commanded the cordial support of almost all the conflicting parties in the Church. The Judaizing section hailed it as elevating the clergy above the vulgar into a special sacerdotal caste. The eclectic New Platonic section rejoiced at its enforcement of their peculiar badge of 'High Virtue,' so long extravagantly extolled by all the great guides of public opinion. The Roman hostility to marriage which Augustus could not conquer, and to which even Nero was forced to give way, made it also welcome to the mere lovers of ease and of public life—unhappily an increasing party at Rome. The monks, and now 'their name was legion,' hailed the decree with a jubilant shout that stunned and terrified into silence the married clergy, who, after all, could scarcely object, for Siricius had craftily made some temporary concessions in their favour. Those who confessed that the marriage of the clergy was a fault, and could plead ignorance that celibacy was an established usage of the

Church, were exempted from penalties, but could not hope for promotion to a more exalted rank, which was henceforth reserved for the professors of 'High Virtue.' Above all, look at the effects of this decree and acknowledge the unrivalled genius of Rome in the art of government! It thus established a right of command over all the clergy of the Church; and by freeing them from family ties and national interests, it was training them as its own well-disciplined and stern legionaries. By this magic spell, as it were, the Roman Church became petrified into the Roman Empire, aiming at establishing its dominion throughout the world, by a universal code and government—by a hierarchy of skilfully disciplined religious prætors or pro-consuls, and a host of inferior officers, each in strict canonical subordination to those immediately above them, and gradually descending into the lowest rank of society; the whole with the old Roman certain degree of freedom of action, but a constrained and limited freedom, and with an appeal to the bishop of Rome, as the spiritual Cæsar, in the last resort. And yet, as Dean Milman shows, notwithstanding all the pressure brought to bear upon them, the married clergy formed the majority in some places, even near Rome; and, by always electing married bishops, they kept up a formidable succession. They comforted themselves with Jovinian's use of the Song of Solomon in favour of Christian wedlock, arguing that the holiest of things, the union of CHRIST with His Church, would not be typified by marriage unless that union were a sacred thing. Others less courageous, had recourse to evasions or secret violations of the law, infinitely more dangerous to public morals. Indeed, from the issue of this momentous decretal to the Reformation, it was more or less openly defied, infringed, or eluded. However, as celibacy was proclaimed to be the peculiar badge of 'High Virtue,' there was this astute appeal to the pride of the

clergy, that it set them above the vulgar; and they were also constrained to it by the fear of falling in general estimation below their perpetual rivals the monks. To Siricius, then, belongs the unenviable distinction of having by his ability and authority overthrown one of the choicest means supplied by the Gospel for the civilization of the world, the Christian Family. To Siricius the Roman Church owes the machinery by which she forged the chains of her spiritual despotism. The Dark Ages are approaching.

Ambrose, as unwittingly and as effectually as Jerome, contributed to raise the bishops of Rome to supremacy by his famous humiliation of the Emperor Theodosius. Superior as he was to all his predecessors in knowledge of Christianity, in obedience to its precepts, and in zeal for its extension, Theodosius was a true Spaniard, impatient of insult and vehement in retaliation. The unruly rabble of Antioch had mortally offended him by their insults to his statue during a riot, and terrible vengeance would have avenged the dishonour, but for the intercession of the aged bishop of Antioch, Flavianus, who represented how much more heinous would be the destruction of God's image in man by the wholesale execution of the criminals; and who urged that the greater their guilt, the greater would be the magnanimity of the Emperor if he would pardon it, and thus raise his statues, not of perishable materials, in the hearts of all mankind. But when a still worse riot occurred at Thessalonica, in which the imperial officers were wounded or slain, and the Emperor's representative had been insulted, notwithstanding every attempt of the clergy to allay the fury of Theodosius, the counsels of his violent advisers prevailed. Secret orders were issued; the Circus, filled with the whole population of the city, was surrounded with troops, and seven thousand lives were sacrificed in remorseless carnage, to revenge the insult on the imperial dignity!

Ambrose wrote to the Emperor, expressing the horror of himself and his brother bishops at this awful atrocity, refusing to communicate with a man stained with the innocent blood, not of one but of thousands, and exhorting him to repent. He acted up to this declaration ; and for eight months the Emperor of the Roman world found the doors of the Church which were freely open to the slave and the beggar, closed against himself. Submission and remonstrance were alike used to obtain a private reconciliation with the Church. Ambrose calmly replied, that the Emperor might kill him, and pass over his body into the sanctuary. At length Theodosius was admitted into the outer porch, the place of the public penitents, and stopped there by the Archbishop, who, in the lofty tone and language of an ambassador of the King of kings, warned him that private contrition was not sufficient expiation for a public crime. When the Emperor humbly suggested that David had also been guilty of homicide, the Archbishop replied, ‘ You have imitated David in his crime ; imitate then his repentance.’

So, for the first time, a Roman Emperor trembled at a subject’s rebuke. He submitted to the humiliating conditions dictated by Ambrose—that he should issue an edict prohibiting the execution of capital punishments for thirty days after conviction, thus preventing a recurrence of his crime ; and that he should perform public penance. When the decree went forth (the foundation of our own merciful delay of execution), the hero of an hundred fights, the master of the world, humbly stripped himself of his imperial ornaments, took his place amongst the common penitents in the church porch ; cast himself prostrate upon the pavement, beating his breast, tearing his hair, and watering the ground with his tears, till he at length received the hard wrung absolution.

1 of Rome have trampled on the necks of prostrate

Emperors, and pleaded this act of Ambrose as their precedent. Would that they imitated his tolerant spirit to Dissenters, as well as his boldness in reproving a guilty monarch ! When the two Spanish bishops, Ithacius and Idacius, and the usurper Maximus, for the first time in the annals of Christianity, *judicially* condemned and shed the blood of the sectarian Priscillian and his followers, Ambrose publicly condemned the sanguinary act as 'unchristian,' and refused to hold communion with the blood-stained bishops. The famous bishop Martin, of Tours, whose life was an unwearied campaign against paganism, and whose unrelenting hand had demolished every idol within his reach, vehemently joined Ambrose in protesting against this Inquisitorial barbarity, and all Christendom re-echoed their denunciations against the perpetrators of this 'judicial murder.' Cardinal Baronius tells us that this universal protest was the origin of that strange custom of the Roman priests in after ages, that when consigning a heretic to the magistrate for execution, on the scaffold or at the stake, they always '*used effectual intercessions that he might not be punished with death ;*' although by the famous persecuting Canon Law of the fourth Lateran Council, held in Rome itself, and presided over by the most able and powerful of all the popes, Innocent III., the magistrate is compelled, under pain of the papal curse, to exterminate the heretic with the utmost rigour !!!

Theodosius devoted his last years to the suppression of paganism throughout the Empire. His edicts gradually rose into proclaiming Ancient Romanism a capital crime, and eagerly pursuing it into its most secret lurking-places. By the Theodosian code, the pagan lights on altars, incense, and garlands were made as penal offences as the sacrifices themselves. Any house profaned with pagan incense was forfeited to the Exchequer, and also any estate on which a tree

was found bearing pagan chaplets. Whoever offered sacrifice in a public temple, was fined twenty-five pounds of gold—a thousand pounds of our money.

Theophilus, of Alexandria, distinguished himself by his success in exposing the 'pious frauds' and vices of the priests of these pagan temples; their dexterity in the management of the loadstone; their secret methods of introducing a human actor into a hollow statue, to give oracles; their machinery for executing mock miracles, and perpetrating infamous deceptions on their credulous votaries. He found the Imperial soldiers more useful in this crusade; perhaps because they were less superstitious than his own host of monks. 'Is it true,' said the Emperor Augustus to an old officer at whose house he supped, 'that the man who gave the first blow to the golden image of Anaitis was instantly deprived of his eyes and of his life?'—'*I* was that man,' replied the clear-sighted veteran, 'and now you sup on one of the legs of the goddess.' The temple of Serapis at Alexandria, next to that of Jupiter in the Capitol at Rome, was the proudest monument of paganism, uniting the colossal grandeur of Egyptian with the fine harmony of Grecian art. The colossal image of Serapis was worshipped throughout the East and Greece with surpassing enthusiasm. It was said to have been the work of Sesostris, and was made of all the metals fused together, gold, silver, copper, iron, lead, and tin. It was inlaid with all kinds of precious stones; the whole was polished, and appeared of azure colour. The measure, or bushel, the emblem of plenty, crowned its head, and the serpent, the symbol of eternity, coiled round the image, and returning, rested its head on the hands of the god. This enormous image, for many centuries an object of worship, struck awe to the hearts of the monks themselves, who stood silent, inactive, and trembling. Theophilus directed an Im-

perial soldier to proceed to the assault ; and the veteran struck the image on the knee. The blow echoed through the breathless marble halls, but no sound nor sign of Divine vengeance followed. The emboldened soldier climbed up to the head, and struck it off ; it rolled upon the ground ; Serapis gave no signs of life, but a large colony of rats rushed forth. From breathless awe the multitude passed at once to ungovernable mirth, and the work of destruction went on amid peals of laughter, coarse jests, and shouts of acclamation. The Pagans joined in the sport, and joined in mockery against their unresisting god, as fragments of his huge body were hewn off, the veteran, of course, claiming a double portion. The indefatigable Theophilus completed the work by exposing the ingenious devices—repeated, alas ! in monasteries, as was discovered at the Reformation—by which miracles were performed by the image. He chiefly exulted in the discovery of a hole in the wall so contrived that the beams of the sun at a particular time fell on the idol's face, and their flashing gleams on its lips were pointed out to the awe-stricken votaries as a smile of the favouring deity, when propitiated by enormous gifts to the priests !

Paganism never produced martyrs ; being equally defective in argument, it seized the sword ; and Eugenius, a pagan rhetorician, rose in revolt, unrolled the images of the gods upon his banners, and bore Hercules at the head of his army, loudly boasting that his soldiers would stable their horses in the Christian Churches, and impress their clergy into his legions. Arrived at Rome, Eugenius restored the statue of Victory to the Senate. Theodosius and Eugenius encountered each other in a sanguinary engagement at Aqualeia, near the Adriatic, and though the Gauls and Germans in the insurgent army gained the advantage on the first day, the skill and valour of the Christian champion triumphed



in a crowning victory. Theodosius marched to Rome, where he was received with trembling deference. The Christian poet Prudentius describes a solemn debate of the Senate on the claims of the SAVIOUR or Jupiter to the adoration of the Romans, and paints in glowing colours the dignity and earnestness with which the conqueror proposed the question to the Conscript Fathers. According to his account, Jupiter was outvoted by a large majority, and for the first time Roman noble families, to the number of six hundred, passed over to the Church!

Four months afterwards this last great Emperor of the world expired, commending his two sons to the care of Ambrose. Gieseler notices that heathen honours were paid to this zealous Christian Emperor, whose death was celebrated as an ascent to the gods! So much for the tenacity with which even the imperial converts clung to paganism. Ambrose did not long survive his imperial friend; dying, as he almost lived, in the attitude of prayer, and saying to his mourning clergy with his last breath:—‘I have not so lived among you as to be ashamed to live; I have so good a Master, that I am not afraid to die.’

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(See Gibbon, iii. 41-147, 255, *passim*. Milman, *H.C.* iii. 49-106, 286-332, 523; *L.C.* i. 56-80. Neander, iii. 298, 364; iv. 461-465, 501, 548. Gieseler, i. 305-320, 330-360. Mosheim, i. 335, 405. Athanas. *De Incarnat. Verb.* Waterland, iv, 268-301. Ammian, xxiii. 1: xxvii. 3. Baronius, Ann. 386, n. 23. Hieron. *Epist.* xviii. Stanley, *E.C. passim*.)

## CHAPTER IX.

‘ Bless’d is the womb that bare HIM—bless’d  
 The bosom where His lips were press’d;  
 But *rather* bless’d are they  
 Who hear His word and keep it well,  
 The living homes where CHRIST shall dwell,  
 And never pass away.’

—KEBLE.

HONORIUS—VALENTINIAN III.—MAXIMUS—AVITUS—MARJORAN  
 SEVERUS—ANTHEMIUS—OLYBRIUS, GLYCERIUS, NEPOS.

ROME thrice shines out on the page of history, during the first ten years of the Fifth Century, with awful clearness, seen by the lurid light of its own flames. Thrice, during that short period, the terrible Goths crossed the Alps as ministers of Divine vengeance; the first time under Alaric; the second under Rhadagasius; the third again under Alaric. At the first siege of Rome the heaps of unburied corpses produced a pestilence. In vain the Senate tried to soften the conqueror. Alaric scorned alike their money, their despair, and their pride. When they spoke of their immense population, he exclaimed—‘The thicker the hay, the easier it is mown.’ On his demanding an exorbitant ransom, they humbly inquired, ‘What, then, do you leave us?’ ‘Your lives,’ replied the insulting Goth.

The second siege of Rome was attended by such a terrible

famine, that the population was reduced to the most loathsome and abominable food. The Romans, though they had no bread, had still their public games, and in the midst of them it was awful to hear the cry, 'Fix the tariff for human flesh!' The third siege of Rome surpassed in its horrors everything recorded in profane and sacred history. Jerome, in his secluded cell at Bethlehem, heard such a report of its terrific woes that, in his vivid fancy, he heaps together the awful passages in the Scripture on the capture of Jerusalem and other Eastern cities, and Virgil's noble lines on the sack of Troy, as but feebly descriptive of the night in which fell the 'Moab of the West.' And yet, in his very next letter, he declares that the capture and its horrors are not merely *mitigated*, but amply *compensated* to Rome, and to the world, by the profession of virginity made by Demetrias, against the wishes of her whole family, and therefore the greater the merit!

Neither of the degenerate sons of the great Theodosius succoured the stricken city, from which they had long withdrawn. ARCADIUS ruled in Constantinople, and more and more absorbed in the cares and calamities of the Eastern Sovereignty, he and his successors, till the time of Justinian, made no attempt to exercise imperial power in Rome. His brother HONORIUS, as timorous as the chickens which he delighted to feed, fled before the barbarians, until he found a secure retreat in Ravenna.

This city, from its almost inaccessible situation on the coast of the Adriatic, about ten miles from the most southern of the seven mouths of the Po, had attracted the attention of the Emperor Augustus, who constructed there a capacious harbour, and extensive arsenals and barracks, which rendered it one of the most important fortresses in Italy. The principal canal of Augustus poured a copious stream of the

waters of the Po through the midst of the city, to the entrance of the harbour; other canals introduced the same waters into the deep ditches that encompassed the city walls, and divided the streets into a multitude of small islands, between which the communication was maintained only by boats and bridges. Ravenna, like Venice, whose appearance it resembled, was raised on the foundation of wooden piles, and the surrounding country for many miles was a deep and impassable morass, through which ran a narrow causeway, easily defended, connecting the city with the Continent. The gradual retreat of the sea for nearly four miles from the modern city increased the natural strength of the place, by protecting it from the enemy's fleet, for already the port of Augustus was converted into pleasant orchards, and a lovely grove of pines covered the ground where the Roman fleet once rode at anchor. To these impregnable fortifications and morasses Honorius, anxious alone for his personal safety, retired; and his example was imitated by his successors, the Gothic kings, and after them the Exarchs, who occupied the palace at Ravenna, not one venturing to fix his residence at Rome, and inhabit the mouldering palaces of the Cæsars. Even the nobles of Rome were scattered abroad after the capture of the city, and centuries passed before those great feudal families grew up, which so often humbled the popes by insult, or exile, or compulsory appointment at their own factious will.

Still the majestic name of Rome attracted to it the commerce and the concourse, the sympathy and reverence of Christendom. Its Bishop also held the seat of Cæsar's tribunal, to which the Roman world had acquired an inveterate habit of appeal; for the feeble Emperor Valentinian II., to relieve himself of trouble and perplexity in religious questions, had legally invested the Roman bishop with his own

imperial prerogative of hearing appeals in religious cases. Hence whilst Honorius was cowering in his stronghold from the perils which were convulsing the Empire on all sides, and feeding his chickens, bishop Innocent I., with infinitely more ability, ambition, and boldness than any bishop before him, was seated firmly on the Episcopal throne of Rome, and asserting his almost despotic spiritual control over the very provinces which were withdrawing their doubtful allegiance, or in danger of being lost to the Emperor! So utterly abandoned was Rome by Honorius that he was alarmed, it was reported, when informed of its capture, till he understood it was not his favourite chicken of that name, but only the ancient capital of the world that had been taken! What a golden opportunity for an ambitious bishop's prosecution of his claims to spiritual supremacy!

Upon Innocent appears first distinctly to have dawned the vast idea of the Roman bishop's supremacy over Christendom, dim as yet and shadowy, yet full and comprehensive in its outline. He declares, in one of his earliest epistles, that all the Churches of the West, not of Italy alone, but of Gaul, Spain, and Africa, having been planted by St. Peter and his successors the bishops of Rome, owe filial obedience to Rome, are bound to follow her example in all points of discipline, and to maintain a rigid uniformity with all her usages! His pretensions to supremacy were further favoured by the bitter feuds which drove all the Eastern Churches to court the alliance of Rome, which could hardly be without some compromise of their independence. In defending against his Alexandrian rival, the celebrated John Archbishop of Constantinople, surnamed Chrysostom, or *Golden-mouth*, from his wondrous eloquence, Innocent sagaciously took not only the better, but the more popular side.

Chrysostom was born at Antioch, and studied oratory

under the philosopher Libanius, who used his utmost arts, and displayed all that is alluring in Grecian poetry and philosophy, to bring up his promising pupil as an ornament and a pillar of falling Paganism. But his Christian mother Anthusa's watchful care preserved her son from the snare, by interesting his young mind in the study of the Holy Scriptures, and at the age of eighteen he left the bar—where he had highly distinguished himself—and was appointed a reader in the Church. Then a source of oratory infinitely more exalting and noble than the dead philosophy and paganism of Greece, a heart full of the love which flows from Faith, gave to his native eloquence, cultivated by the study of the ancients, its animating charm, and burning zeal did the rest. A friend inflamed by example the fervour of his piety; and they proposed to retire together to one of the most remote hermitages in Syria. So the greatest Christian orator of his age was almost self-doomed to silence, or to exhaust his eloquence in ejaculations, heard by no human ear. His mother again preserved him to a life of Christian usefulness. There is something exquisitely touching in the domestic scenes which sometimes flit across the busy pages of Roman history, and such are our feelings in reading the life of Chrysostom. His mother had been a widow at the age of twenty, and devoted herself to the care of her child. Chrysostom himself, with affecting simplicity and tenderness, tells us that when she heard of his determination to retire to a hermitage in a distant region, she took him by the hand, she led him to her chamber, she made him sit beside her on the bed, in which she had borne him, and burst out into tears, and into words more sad than tears. She spoke in mournful accents of the cares and troubles of widowhood; grievous as they had been, she had ever one consolation, the gazing on his face, and beholding in him the softened image

of his noble father. Before he could speak, he had thus been her comfort and her joy. She reminded him of the fidelity with which she had administered the paternal property. 'Think not,' she concluded, 'that I would reproach you with these things. I have but one favour to entreat—Make me not the second time a widow, by forsaking me for a hermitage. Awake not again my slumbering sorrows. Wait at least for my death; perhaps I shall depart before long. When you have laid me in the earth, and re-united my bones to those of your father, then travel wherever thou wilt, even beyond the sea; but, as long as I live, endure to dwell in my house, and offend not God by afflicting your mother, who is at least blameless towards thee.'

After his mother's death, Chrysostom retired to a monastery; but the practical piety which he had learned at her knee prevented him from remaining long with 'the followers of idleness.' He returned to Antioch, was ordained deacon, then presbyter; and at once raised to the office generally reserved for the bishop, that of principal preacher of the city. His first sermon is highly characteristic; and perhaps he is the only preacher that ever selected as his first text St. Paul's friendly charge 'to his dearly beloved son Timothy,' to take care of his health—'Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake, and thine often infirmities' (1 Tim. v. 23). That discourse shows his own conversion, like that of Timothy, had not been the result of any violent crisis, but that from 'a child' it had harmoniously developed itself in the influence of profound study of the Holy Scriptures, and of the gentle atmosphere of Christian love and activity with which his heavenly-minded mother had surrounded him. By thus early incorporating the Holy Scriptures into his inner life, he, by grace, attained the rich inward experience, the lively feeling of the need of Redemp-

tion, the earnest yearning after the ideal of Christian holiness, which strike so forcibly those familiar with his writings. His ingenuity, too, in displaying the 'spirit' that enabled Timothy to bear his 'often infirmities,' and to 'be more than a conqueror in the good fight of faith,' gives us a glimpse of the Christian fortitude, most intimately blended with Christian humility, that animated himself, and filled him with the conviction to which he remained true in all his trials, and which formed the great motto of his life—viz., 'That no power could injure the man who did not wrong himself, did not abandon and betray his own highest interests.' Shakespeare's famous sentiment is a kindred one,

'To thine ownself be true,  
And it must follow, as the night the day,  
Thou canst not then be false to any man.'

During the long and agonizing interval of the bishop's absence, on his mission to the Court of the mortally offended Theodosius, Chrysostom several times daily ascended the pulpit, even after the hour of dinner, and with wonderful skill, judgment, versatility, and almost all the life of a dramatic representation, succeeded in allaying the terror, without too highly encouraging the hopes of the people. 'The clemency of the Emperor may forgive their guilt, but Christians ought to be superior to the fear of death; they cannot be secure of pardon in this world, but they may be secure of immortality in the world to come.' And then, in one of his finest passages, he reminds his hearers of their greater offences against the KING of Kings.

After having held Antioch, as its bishop, spell-bound by his Christian oratory for many years, Chrysostom was raised, almost by force, to the Archiepiscopal throne of Constanti-



noble. The exalted notions of the clerical character which he had developed in his great work upon the priesthood—that work so ingeniously perverted by the papal priesthood to justify their claims of being ‘lords over God’s heritage’—now strongly appeared in the conduct of Chrysostom. His self-denial appeared, not merely in the scanty meal of his solitary chamber, but in his palace and his hall, whence he banished all the carpets and silken trappings; and sold the costly furniture, rich marbles, and gorgeous plate, to replenish the funds of hospitals and other charitable institutions. He visited the whole of Asia Minor; degraded bishops; severely censured the vices and venality of their clergy; and made the Pulpit so tremendous an engine of attack upon the glaring vices and follies of the Metropolis of the East, that of him it might well be said that ‘he shook one world by the thunders of the other.’ And yet the still small voice of Redeeming love often spoke from Chrysostom’s pulpit, even in assailing such a monstrous abuse as Image-worship had now become at Constantinople. After proving that the truer image of the SAVIOUR could be found in His life, exhibited in the Gospels, than in any fancied *servant-form*; he shows that His moral image may be imprinted upon the soul by copying His holy walk. ‘Teach the soul how she can form a mouth which is like the mouth of CHRIST, for she can form such a one if she will. And how is this to be done? By what colours? By what materials?—By no colours—By no materials; but only by virtue, by meekness, and humility. How many are there among us who wish to see His form? Behold! we can not only see Him, but be really like Him, if we are really in earnest.’ After an eloquent description of the SAVIOUR’s glorified Resurrection-body, he adds, ‘Perhaps you are now seized with the desire of beholding that image. But if we will, we may behold a far better one

than my poor words have portrayed—we may behold the blessed sight of His Divine Majesty in Eternal life, and become like HIM when we shall see HIM as HE is.’

Chrysostom was no persecutor. After a soul-harrowing picture of the social evils which resulted from Monachism, he exclaims, ‘Forbidden to imitate the zeal of Phineas, to snatch up a sword and execute speedy vengeance upon the guilty, I take refuge in sighs and tears.’ Unhappily his abandonment of business-matters to his archdeacon Serapion, a passionate man who too often over-ruled his own better and more moderate judgments, and his own austerity, raised a faction against him in the corrupt capital, at the head of which appeared the turbulent Theophilus of Alexandria. Chrysostom, scorning to counteract court-intrigue by the same vile means, betook himself to his peculiar sphere, the Pulpit. In front of the palace, where the Imperial Senate held their assemblies, a magnificent silver statue had been erected to the Empress Eudoxia. Its dedication, accompanied by noisy and indecent festivities, bordering on paganism, disturbed the worship of the great Church in which the Archbishop was preaching. His spirit rose, and caused him to utter the memorable words, suited to the martyrdom of St. John the Baptist, which was celebrated on that day, and which, being reported with exaggeration to the infamous Empress Eudoxia, caused his ruin. ‘The billows,’ said he, ‘are mighty, and the storm furious; but we fear not to be wrecked; for we are founded upon a Rock. What can I fear?—Death?—“To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.” Exile?—“The earth is the Lord’s and the fulness thereof.” Confiscation?—“We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out of it.” I scorn the terrors, and smile at the advantages of life. I fear not death. I desire to live only for your profit. . . . The Church

against which you strive, dashes away your assaults into idle foam. It is fixed by God, who shall shake it? The Church is stronger than heaven itself! "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." . . . But you know, my brethren, the true cause of my ruin. Because I have not strewn rich carpets on my floors, nor clothed myself in silken robes; because I have discountenanced the sensuality of certain persons. The seed of the serpent is yet alive; but grace is still on the side of Elijah.' After a dark allusion to the martyrdom of John the Baptist, and to the hostility of Herodias, he concluded with the memorable words, which were perverted to his ruin—'It is a time of wailing—lo, all things tend to *disgrace*; but time judgeth all things.' The fatal word '*disgrace*' (in the Greek *adoxia*) was construed into allusion to *Eudoxia*—the infamous Empress.

Amidst all the scenes of persecution and of exile in which Chrysostom was henceforth involved, the Christian patience and peacefulness with which he shrunk from being the cause, even innocently, of rebellion and bloodshed, when a few fervent words might have maddened his admiring hearers into insurrection, command our admiration. He merely appealed to the three great prelates of the West, the bishops of Rome, Milan, and Aquileia, entreating them to obtain a general and legitimate Council to examine impartially the accusations against him. Innocent's reply is so subtle as to make it the first opening scene of all the astute diplomacy which distinguishes the papacy, and enables it to hold its temporal power amongst the nations. He expresses horror at the barbarous acts of Chrysostom's foes, and a deep interest in him; but he declines to commit himself to any opinion of the case; and will not refuse to communicate with Theophilus till after the solemn decree of a Council. Meanwhile he so skilfully and secretly

worked upon Honorius as to obtain his Imperial edict for the recall of the eloquent and popular exile. It soon transpired that Chrysostom owed this great boon to the bishop of Rome, and all Christendom felt lively gratitude to Innocent. It was even reported that he had boldly excommunicated the Eastern Emperor; and the regular act of excommunication has been produced by Cardinal Baronius, expressed with all the proud humility and unctuous imperiousness of a later period. But the fatal blunder of including the Empress Eudoxia, who had been some time dead, has proved it to be another of the scandalous forgeries so disgraceful to the Roman Church. It is curious to see Innocent, even in his correspondence on this melancholy case, attributing a sort of subordinate primacy to Antioch, as the temporary See of St. Peter, thus skillfully making out a superior title for Rome, as the supposed scene of his permanent residence and martyrdom. But the recall of Chrysostom came too late. Whilst the Imperial guards were cruelly hurrying him to another place of exile, amongst barbarians at the very verge of the Empire, he was summoned into the joy of his LORD, and departed in full and peaceful consciousness of his approaching bliss. The last words on his lips were those of Job—which in his own season of quiet prosperity he had so often impressed on the hearts of his hearers as a safe-guard against pride, and which in times of trial he so often presented to himself and to his friends, as the richest source of consolation—‘The LORD gave and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.’

The celebrated Augustine was also an unconscious instrument in advancing the Roman bishop's ambitious designs. He was born in the year 354, at Tagasta, a city of Numidia, of respectable Christian parents. In his childhood, he was attacked by a dangerous illness, and entreated to be baptized,

but on his recovery his good impressions faded away, amidst the studies which he pursued with brilliant success at Maduara and Carthage. When they were finished his impetuous and ungoverned spirit by turns plunged him into the mire of sinful indulgence, the vague and fantastic reveries of the Manichean heresy, or the proud indifference of pagan philosophy. His mother Monica, with the anxious apprehensions and prescient hopes of a Christian mother's heart, watched over the irregular development of his wild and powerful genius. Her distress at one time almost deepened to despair, till she was consoled by an aged bishop with the memorable words which seemed to her 'a voice from heaven,' as he said, 'Be of good cheer; it is not possible that a child of such prayers and tears should perish.' Ambitious of seeking a more distinguished sphere for his talents, Augustine left Carthage for Rome, and his fame soon obtained him a chair of rhetoric at Milan. But in all his wanderings Monica never lost sight of her wilful son, and he thus affectingly describes her untiring efforts for his conversion:—

'I remained in danger of the fire and torments worthy of my deeds. But my mother, courageous through her piety, followed me by land and sea; secure of Thy favour, O LORD, in all dangers. Morning and evening she frequented the church, to hear Thy Word and to pray; and the salvation of her son was the constant burden of her supplications. She prayed for me absent, and Thou, every-where present, heardest her where she was, and pitied me wherever I was. Thou heardest, O LORD! and performedst in due season Thy will. Whenever I told her how hopeless was my case, she answered that she believed in Christ, that before she left this world she would see me a sound believer.'

By the over-ruling influence of Providence the step of leaving his country, against which Monica most strongly re-

monstrated, led to that conversion which she fondly hoped for. Ambrose felt a deep interest in the promotion of piety amongst the young men of Milan ; and amidst all his labours devoted part of each day to receive such visitors as his sermons had stirred up to inquiry. Augustine was soon of the number ; and to the instructions of Ambrose and the study of St. Paul's Epistles he attributed his conversion. This last Christian mother that shines in Church history down to the Reformation—for Siricius by his fell swoop scattered the Christian Family for a thousand years—expired in her son's arms, rejoicing at the fulfilment of all her prayers and at his baptism by the hands of Ambrose. Augustine returned to Africa, and forced by the entreaties of the people of the city of Hippo to become their bishop, he spent upwards of forty years in that humble episcopate, sending forth from time to time the many and valuable works which were mighty bulwarks of the faith in those unsettled days. Indeed, of all he was at once the first universal, the purest, and most powerful of the Latin Christian writers. He fully possessed and freely used the whole range of Latin literature, and all the knowledge which had been accumulated in the Roman world. His ardent imagination was tempered by exceedingly strong reasoning powers, which boldly grappled with every subject. His illustrations were totally different from the florid and Oriental style of Chrysostom and most other Christian writers ; no mere fancy but a real deep glance into the working of the material universe, as symbolic of the spiritual and unseen one ; neither were they drawn from some sublime or rarely seen natural objects, but from familiar objects, some dog, or kettle, or fish-wife, with a homely insight into real life worthy of Socrates. No long bursts of declamation, but dramatic dialogue and questions, bye hints and unexpected hits, by some quaintest turns of fancy introducing often to the de-

lighted reader precious truths of Gospel love never to be forgotten. Hence, next after Tertullian and Jerome, Augustine gives us more life-like sketches of society than any other ancient Christian writer. No other author gives such honest descriptions of the mischievous results of the injudicious patronage extended by the Emperors to Christianity, instead of supporting its ministers and then leaving it to work its way. 'How many,' he complains, 'seek JESUS only that HE may benefit them in earthly matters! One man has a law-suit, so he becomes a Christian to get success. Another is oppressed by his superiors, so he seeks refuge in the Church. Others are seeking, one in this way, and another in that, to obtain patronage which they have no other means of gaining. The Church is daily full of those persons. Seldom is JESUS sought for JESUS' sake.' He sometimes cheerfully adds, 'Often the mercy of God so helps our ministry that a pagan, moved by the discourse, resolves to become that which he meant to feign.' Even when he laments over vast crowds who called themselves Christians because they thronged the churches on the two Christian festivals of Easter and Whitsuntide, and frequented the theatres on the pagan festivals, he comforts himself by the homely illustration of the oil press, that some light may arise from this darkness. Image-worshippers he classes amongst those nominal Christians to whom the spirit of Christianity is unknown; and this is his antidote—'Let us hear the Gospel with such a mind as if we saw JESUS always present before us; and let us not say to ourselves "Blessed are they who could see HIM!" since many of those who actually saw HIM have perished, while many among us who have not seen HIM believe on HIM. The LORD is above; but here, too, in the very midst of us, is the LORD of Truth.' He complains also of the foolish rage for pilgrimages, and laments that multitudes were rushing to visit, as if a source

of true holiness, the empty (pretended) sepulchre of the SAVIOUR, and even made their way to Arabia to kiss the dunghill on which Job was supposed to have sat. His personal appearance was also most attractive. He is described as a tall, delicately-featured personage, with a lofty and narrow forehead, prematurely furrowed like his cheeks with lines of thought and of sorrow. Resolve, gentle but unbending, was expressed in his thin close-set lips and his clear, quick eye; but the calm of his noble countenance was the calm of a worn-out volcano, over which centuries must pass before the earthquake-rents be filled with kindly soil, and the cinder-slopes grow gay with grass and flowers.

Augustine always had great influence at the Court of Ravenna. Of the ministers of Honorius some were his personal friends, others courted his correspondence; for Africa, being still the only granary of the West, held the power of life and death over Italy, and he was the darling of the African Churches. Hence Innocent established the Augustinian Theology as the theory of the Roman Church, and such it remains to this day, however inconsistent with its other dogmas. How often it was exercised for good we shall find in the lives of Luther, Calvin, and Jansenius; but its immediate effect was for evil, for Innocent and his successors astutely perverted it to strengthening the papacy.

His 'Confessions' quickly became the manual of passionate devotion throughout Christendom, and still possess an absorbing interest. In that extraordinary autobiography most earnest men behold, in an appalling but attractive manner, reflected with bold and speaking truth all the conflicts of the inner life, which multitudes have felt under the awakening and sanctifying influence of the HOLY SPIRIT, but which no one has ever yet embodied in such true, and tender, and thrilling words. Unhappily, however, it has worked for evil



as well as for good, from being so deeply saturated with the ascetic spirit of his times. Already the vast majority of professing Christians had begun to shrink from the contemplation of the Divine image of perfection in the life of the REDEEMER, and were turning to the more earthly, more familiar, picture of the development of their own Christian character, crossed though it might be with the light and shade of human weakness and human passion.

His 'City of God' was written to comfort the Roman Church under the calamities of these three terrible sieges. Christianity had been accused by the pagans, as the cause of the decline of the Empire and of all its woes ; but Augustine by several passages from Cicero's work on the Republic shows, that the elements of ruin were in fierce activity in the Roman State long before the time of our SAVIOUR. It is very remarkable that this important work of Cicero, of which Niebuhr so ably availed himself, after having been lost to the world nearly fifteen hundred years, was discovered in the Vatican Library, beneath a work of Augustine, some years ago. In this great work he vindicates the wisdom, justice, and goodness of God in His dealings with men ; sometimes visibly punishing sin that His providence might not be denied ; and oftener letting it go unpunished, that men might expect the great day of righteous retribution. He vividly sketches off ancient Rome, its shadowy virtues, and shadowy rewards, the folly of its vain glory, and the vanity of that military fame which, except in the moment of victory, leaves the conquered not a whit inferior in true happiness to their conquerors. He portrays the crimes and calamities of the Romans during their worship of their ancient gods ; and ascribes their former glory to the valour, the frugality, the contempt of wealth and the fortitude inspired by their ardent patriotism. He then exerts all his

skill and power in refutation of their subtle philosophy, dismissing with contempt the gross forms of popular idolatry. Finally he places in high contrast the origin, the nature, the destiny of the New City, that of God; he enters largely into the evidences of Christianity; he describes the sanctifying effects of faith in CHRIST; and most touchingly and humbly relates his own spiritual experience as displaying the beneficial effects of affliction on the Children of God, and its evil influence on the ungodly, 'for the self-same movement which makes the dunghill taint the air makes precious ointment to perfume it sweetly.' But he pours forth all the riches of his imagination and eloquence on the destinies of the Church at the second coming of CHRIST, on the magnificence of His final kingdom, and the glories of the Resurrection. Augustine never dreamt of the professedly Christian spiritual Empire of Rome which would replace the fallen Rome of Paganism. Much less did he fancy that when he so eloquently described the City of God, as *earning* future dignities by present humility, and as disciplined for universal rule by the incentives of fear, the torments of pain, the fatigues of labour and the perils of temptations; that his words would be afterwards wrested to the establishment of a new and undefined kingdom, rising out of the ruins of Ancient Rome, and ruled by its bishop as the irresponsible and infallible head of all Christendom! Strange that Augustine's City of God, so heavenly in its conceptions and describing the kingdom of CHRIST, which is 'not of this world,' should prepare the way for an earthly monarchy ruling by spiritual means!

Augustine's admirable treatises on the Person and Offices of the HOLY SPIRIT, in confutation of Pelagius,—who denied original sin, asserted the entire freedom of the will, and limited Divine grace,—had a still stranger influence on modern Romanism. For whilst Augustine,—perhaps in too

metaphysical a manner, and not allowing sufficiently for the action of the conscience and reason,—painted man's total natural depravity and utter dependence upon the Divine agency in the heart and soul, it was afterwards argued that the Sacraments and other rites of which the clergy were the exclusive ministers, alone conveyed the influences of the HOLY SPIRIT to the passive soul ; so that even these doctrines of grace were wrested to the establishment of a strong sacerdotal system ! And yet, as Neander observes, Augustine declared that not St. Peter, but the SAVIOUR is the Rock on which the Church is founded ; and that, ' in this case, St. Peter is the image of the whole Church which in the present world is shaken by divers trials, as by floods and storms ; and yet does not fall, because it is founded on the Rock from which St. Peter received his name. For the Rock is not so called after Peter, but Peter is so called after the Rock ; just as CHRIST is not called after the Christian but the Christian after Christ ; for it was on this account our LORD declares, " Upon this Rock I will build My Church," for CHRIST was the Rock, on whose foundation *Peter himself* was built, " for other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." ' (1 Cor. iii. 11).

The humility inseparable from genuine godliness and genius beautifully shines forth in Augustine's noble maxim, '*The love which is rooted in humility alone, under grace, can give the right understanding of Christianity.*' This it was which inspired his famous answer to the philosophical caviller of his time :—" Behold, to him who asks—" What did GOD do before He created Heaven and Earth ?"—I answer not as one would who might wish to evade the force of such a question by a sarcasm—" He was preparing the hell of those who too curiously pry into His high mysteries." Rather would I simply answer, " I do not know, in respect to what I do not

know, than sneer at those who inquire into mysteries, or approve of a false answer." In this humble spirit he devoted the last years of his long and laborious life to the review of all his works, and to the retraction of any of his opinions which his maturer judgment detected as contrary to the Holy Scriptures. He greatly delighted in thus rebuking his extravagant admirers for claiming that authority for his writings due alone to the Word of God; and rejoiced also in making some progress in the truth while retracting his early errors.

Amidst all the sufferings of the siege of Hippo by the Vandals, the venerable Bishop remained at his post comforting, instructing, sympathizing with his people. His daily prayer was—"that God would deliver the city from the enemy; or bestow on His servants the power to endure everything which His will had in store for them; or that He would grant His aged servant a peaceful release out of this present world." The last request was granted to him in the seventy-seventh year of his age, thus escaping the horrors of the capture, the cruelties of the conqueror, and the desolation of his Church.

The adoption of every sort of popular pagan worship was the strength of Ancient Romanism; and the same skilful pursuit of the current of popular opinion has floated 'the bark of Peter' down to our own times. This strikingly appears in the case of Innocent's successor, bishop Zosimus. His first act had been to read before his clergy a justification of the heretic Pelagius, 'with joy, with admiration, with tears of delight.' To one of the African bishops he wrote—"Would that one of you had been present at the edifying scene! That such a man should be impeached, and by such vagabonds as those Gallican bishops Heros and Lazarus! There is no point in which the grace and assistance of God can be asserted by a faithful Christian which has not been

fully acknowledged by him.' But the authority of the Roman bishop was disdainfully rejected by the African bishops, who, at the great Council of Carthage, passed eight canons, or resolutions, against Pelagius. Zosimus, finding the current of popular opinion setting strongly against him, promptly retracted his judgment, and addressed a pastoral to all the bishops of Christendom, requiring them to subscribe to his anathema against the heretic Pelagius !

During four successive years after the death of Zosimus, the regularly elected bishop Eulalius and his rival Boniface waged such fierce and bloody strife, that even the pacific Honorius was constrained to interpose, and to command them both to retire from Rome, until the case should be decided by a Synod of Italian, Gallican, and African bishops. But Eulalius, at the head of his followers, entered the city by night, seized the Lateran, and was expelled with all the higher orders of his party. Honorius established Boniface on the Episcopal throne; and issued a decree, that in case of a contested election of a Roman bishop, both candidates should be set aside and a new appointment made. This is an important landmark of Roman Church history, for the Imperial power assumed, and was acknowledged to possess, full authority to regulate the election of the Roman bishops. Boniface was succeeded by Celestine I., an astute politician, who, whilst the Eastern bishops were fiercely engaged in personal altercation in the unhappy Nestorian quarrel, kept sagaciously aloof, sitting at a distance, a tranquil arbiter. He interfered only when he saw it for his own advantage, or when all parties, exasperated and wearied out, gladly sought any foreign and unpledged judgment; and thus submitted to interference afterwards fatal to their own independence.

Nestorius was a presbyter of Antioch, whose austere life and distinguished eloquence raised him to the Archbishopric

of Constantinople. He was cordially welcomed by the citizens, who still fondly remembered the oratory of Chrysostom, but he provoked hostility by commencing his rule with persecution. 'Give me,' said he to the Emperor, 'a world free from heresy, and I will give you the kingdom of heaven. Aid me in subduing the heretics, and I will aid you in routing the Persians.' He obtained a law against sectarians, and urged its execution so severely, that they called him 'Nestorius the Incendiary.' The hour of their vengeance soon struck. The power exercised by females in Constantinople, now by the sisters and wives, the Pulcherias and Eudoxias, at other times by the mothers of Emperors, the Helenas and Irenes, as in a great measure caused by the civilizing effects of Christianity, predisposed the people to exalt all the female characters of Holy Writ, and especially to honour the 'Mother of Jesus.' So she, who in her own humble words was only 'the handmaid of the LORD,' and whose lowly 'spirit' rejoiced 'in GOD her SAVIOUR,' was gradually raised to become an object of worship which interposed itself between the 'One Mediator between God and man,' and the praying Christian. The honour conferred on the female sex by the birth of the LORD from the Virgin, was dwelt upon by the courtly preachers in glowing terms. Woman's glory was inseparably connected with that of the Virgin mother, and, under the plausible pretext of the more absolute deification of CHRIST, she was even called 'The Mother of God!' Neander proves that this extraordinary title grew out of the Arian disputes at the close of the Fourth Century, but that the ascetics and monks had previously venerated her as their *ideal* of unmarried life, although Tertullian and other early Church-teachers had maintained that by the 'brethren of Jesus' were meant the later born sons of Mary—a point clearly proved by Dean Alford. Mosheim, lynx-eyed in de-

tecting every phase of error, describes the Arabian heresy of the *Collyridians*, chiefly females who openly worshipped her as a goddess, and offered her the cakes which they had formerly presented to 'the Mother of the Gods.' Hence the times favoured the development of this unchristian Christianity—the worship of the Virgin.

Anastasius, a follower of Nestorius, first sounded the clarion of strife, by publicly preaching that such a title was improper, and even impious. The bold preacher was branded as an Arian, and Nestorius came to his rescue, contending that to assert the Eternal Word was born was to deny His Divinity, by the denial of His pre-existence. He proposed that the name CHRIST should be kept sacred, as signifying the Being composed of the blended, yet unconfounded God and Man; and that the Virgin should be called the Mother of CHRIST, not the 'Mother of God,' of the unassociated Divinity. In the great Metropolitan Church he delivered several sermons, placing his views in the most brilliant light. He dwelt with great eloquence on the omnipotence, the glory, and all the transcendent attributes of GOD the CREATOR and REDEEMER. 'And can this GOD have a Mother? Could a creature bear the Uncreated? The human nature alone was born of the Virgin; that which is of the flesh is flesh. The manhood was the instrument of the Divine purposes, the outward and visible vesture of the Invisible. Is it not written, that the Word, which was with the FATHER before the worlds, only *tabernacled* with us?' No attention was paid to his arguments. The presbyters everywhere preached against him, and a bold monk (the monks were always the faithful representatives of the passions and prejudices of their age) forbade the archbishop, as an obstinate heretic, to approach the altar! Nestorius did not bear the insult with Christian patience or calm dignity. He struck the monk, and had

him flogged through the streets, with a crier going before him to proclaim his offence. The rest of his opponents were seized, tried, and barbarously scourged.

With lightning speed the war spread through the East ; and true Christianity would avert its eyes, in shame and sorrow, from the horrible scenes which followed, enacted by men professing themselves preachers of the Gospel of peace and love. The haughty and unscrupulous Cyril, bishop of Alexandria, eagerly seized this opportunity of humbling the rival See. He engaged in a fierce epistolary controversy with Nestorius, in which he was reduced to the very verge of the opinions he opposed. Both parties appealed to Celestine, who, if he had been the most unambitious of mankind, could have hardly declined the arbitration which raised him to stately superiority over the contending Churches. Celestine pronounced against Nestorius, and the Emperor Theodosius II. convoked the first General Council of Ephesus to decide the dispute. If Nestorius came thither with the fond hope of an impartial hearing, that was not the desire of Celestine and Cyril, who had already condemned him as a heretic, and determined that the Council should confirm their anathema. Memnon, bishop of Ephesus, espoused their side, closed all the churches against Nestorius, and refused him the common courtesies of life. The Council was hurried on with indecent haste, in order to exclude the bishop of Antioch and fifty other Eastern bishops, known to be on the way, and supposed to favour Nestorius. Cyril conducted the charge and put the question. Amidst the tears of many bishops, shocked at the uproar and unfairness of the proceedings, the tenets of Nestorius were pronounced blasphemous ; then arose one tumultuous cry, ' Anathema to him who does not anathematize Nestorius ! ' The Church rang with the fatal and re-echoed cry, ' Anathema, anathema ! ' The whole



world unites in the excommunication—Anathema on him who holds communion with Nestorius!’ The whole of these terrible proceedings were crowded into one day. The mob had been impatiently waiting from morn until evening the result. No sooner was it known, than their joyful shouts rent the sky, they escorted the bishops with lighted torches to their abodes, women went before them burning incense, and the city was illuminated. Five days after, arrived John of Antioch and the Eastern bishops. They united with Count Candidianus, the Emperor’s representative, in condemning the conduct of Cyril and Memnon, whom they excommunicated; they jealously watched the city gates to prevent any of the enemies of Nestorius from divulging the news of his excommunication until it should have been cancelled; but all their watchfulness could not intercept Cyril’s secret correspondence with the worst enemies of Nestorius, the monks of Constantinople. A beggar carried a letter announcing to them the glad tidings. A monk, Dalmatius by name, high in repute—who had in vain been entreated by the Emperor to quit his cell, and intercede for the city during an earthquake—now felt compelled by this more solemn call to come forth from his solitude. At the head of a long procession of fanatic monks, ‘filthy animals clad in sheep-skins,’—furious partisans of ‘the Mother of God,’ many of them stained with the blood of the unfortunate female philosopher Hypatia, whom they had dragged from her chariot, stripped of her clothes with the most revolting indecency, and rent limb from limb—he passed slowly through the streets and sat down, as it were, to besiege the palace. Wherever he passed the awe-stricken and wondering multitude burst out into curses upon Nestorius.

Synod after Synod were in vain assembled by the Emperor to allay the strife; even the famous Simeon Stylites, ‘the

martyr in the air,' was implored to intercede with Heaven, from his lofty pillar, that peace might be restored. The princess Pulcheria, the sister or guardian, as she might be called, of the feeble Emperor, was won over to protect the honour of the Virgin and the glory of her sex. The power of the Virgin in the Court of Heaven was craftily held out to her as a precedent for that of holy females in the courts of earth. Her name was hailed in the streets as their patroness by multitudes of wild monks, who filled the city with uproar and defied the civil power. Then, for the first time, painters represented the Virgin in effigy as a beautiful young maiden, holding in her arms the HOLY CHILD; and every one who wished to prove his hatred to the arch-heretic exhibited it either in his house as a picture, or embroidered on his garments, or on his furniture or his personal ornaments—in short, wherever it could be introduced. It is worthy of remark, that Cyril, who was so influential in fixing what Romish theologians call 'the orthodox group,' by his residence in Egypt must have been familiar with the pagan representation of Isis nursing Horus. Who could then have foreseen the fatal use afterwards made of that picture, called by artists 'the Virgin and Child,' in establishing the worship of the Virgin, by exhibiting her as perpetually superior to the SAVIOUR, and thus preparing her devotees for that horribly blasphemous prayer, 'Mother of Mercy, *command* thy Son !'

Nestorius retired to Antioch, where he was received with all honour. Relieved of his presence, his antagonists triumphantly produced their famous 'Authentic Portrait of the Virgin,' pretended to have been painted by St. Luke, and transmitted from the Holy Land to Pulcheria. For centuries it was worshipped as their palladium by the people of Con-

stantinople ; and it was borne in a superb canopy-covered car in the midst of the troops, whenever the Emperor led the army in person. By their intrigues, his enemies at length obtained an Imperial edict against Nestorius, and exiled him to the Egyptian Oasis, as the place most perfectly cut off from communication with Christendom. Even there he found compassion, for when a wild African tribe over-ran the country, they with no little kindness released and conveyed him to Panopolis, a frontier city of the Empire. The Roman Præfect refused him the sympathy which the savages had showed him, and so harshly treated the old and infirm captive, that he at last found rest in the grave. His books were prohibited and publicly burned, his followers were condemned to confiscation of their goods. But Nestorianism over-leaped the stern boundary of the Roman Empire ; it took refuge amongst the Christians of Persia ; carried the Gospel, uncorrupted by Virgin-worship, into parts of the East, never previously penetrated by a Christian foot, and to this day maintains its Oriental conquests.

Celestine was the first Roman bishop that attempted to extend his rule over Ireland, but his agent Palladius quickly retired in despair. However God raised up an Evangelist for 'the Green Isle' in the celebrated Succath, commonly known by his subsequently Latinized name of Patricius, or Patrick, whose faith and love, eloquence and wisdom, were strongly aided by his acquaintance with the language and manners of the people. From his 'Confessions' we learn that he was born near Dumbarton in Scotland, and that, his father being a deacon and his grandfather a presbyter, 'from a child he had known the Holy Scriptures,' which afterwards in his great trials produced much fruit. In his sixteenth year he was seized by pirates, carried to the north of Ire-

land, and sold to a chief named Milcho. 'I knew not yet,' he says, 'the true God, but in a strange land He brought me to a sense of my unbelief; so that I bethought me of my sins, and turned my whole heart to the LORD, who looked down on my loneliness, had pity on my youth and my ignorance, who preserved me ere I knew HIM, and who protected and comforted me as a father doth his son.' In the sixth year of his slavery, he twice in a dream heard a voice bidding him fly to a certain part of the sea-coast, where he would find a ship for his release; and obeying the admonition, he escaped. Ten years later he was again captured by pirates, and sold into Gaul, where some Christian merchants showed him great love, and obtained his freedom. At home again among his rejoicing friends, he began to mourn over the pagan blindness of poor Ireland, and, notwithstanding all their remonstrances, resolved to preach the Gospel there. 'It was not,' says he, 'in my own power; but it was God that conquered in me, and withstood them all.' Having visited Gaul to confer with his friends, and to receive further instruction in the Holy Scriptures, and ordination from the excellent bishop Germanus, he bravely entered on his mission, each morning by beat of drum assembling around him the wild natives in the open fields, relating to them in their own loved tongue the 'story of peace,' which manifested its Divine power on their rude minds. The Druid priests were furious in opposition, but Patrick wisely endeavoured to gain over the chiefs, and in this he was much assisted by the chief bard Dubrach Mac Valnbair, one of his converts, who now composed Christian hymns, and sung them to his harp in the pauses of Patrick's eloquent addresses. We can easily conceive how irresistibly attractive such a missionary must have been to a people by nature so passionately fond of oratory, poetry, and music. We know not how far the fierce Irish

chieftains may have been softened at their great meeting on Tara Hill with Patrick, when

‘The harp that once through Tara’s halls  
The soul of music shed,’

poured forth its melody in praise of the REDEEMER. But the fervent Evangelist’s prayer on the night before the meeting is still existing, exhibiting a clearness and strength of faith in CHRIST, quite enough to account for his wonderful success. All the gifts and lands bestowed on him by the converted chiefs were devoted by Patrick to founding ‘nursing schools for the teachers of the people;’ and from the very first he infused into his followers, naturally gifted as they were with high intelligence, a love for the Holy Scriptures, which for many ages never died out. He gave them also the first means of knowledge, by inventing an alphabet, of which every letter, characteristically of a poetry-loving, simple race, was called after a shrub or tree. Though his friends still urged his return, and the priests still thirsted for his blood, Patrick firmly held his ground to his death. The secret of his marvellous perseverance is revealed at the close of his Confession—‘I pray God that HE would grant me *perseverance* to enable me to approve myself a faithful witness, for the sake of my God, to the end. And if I have ever laboured to accomplish anything good, for the sake of my God whom I love, may HE grant that with these converts and captives of mine, I may pour out my blood for His name!’ He died in peace on the 17th of March, 492, in the hundred and twentieth year of his age, and sixtieth of his mission. His total freedom from connexion with Rome is clear in the absence of its doctrines from his writings, and of its discipline from the flourishing Church of his planting, as Neander

abundantly proves. And yet Patrick has been audaciously claimed as an agent of Rome; and he absolutely forms one of the many magic pillars which so firmly sustain its Spiritual Empire!

Alaric had left Rome only for the purpose of subjugating the South of Italy, resolving to return as the Sovereign of the West. But death surprised him near the little river Busento; and the ferocious character of his barbarian followers was strikingly displayed at his funeral. By the labour of a captive multitude they forcibly diverted the course of the stream; dug a sepulchre in the vacant bed, adorned it with their most splendid spoils and trophies; deposited therein their leader's body decked in most gorgeous array; and restored the waters to their channel. They then massacred all the workmen, that it might never be known where he lay, so that the hand of man might never insult the ashes, and the foot of man might never tread upon the grave of Alaric the Goth, the Conqueror of Rome. His brother Adolph had so little ambition that he consented to quit Italy and reconquer Gaul for the Emperor, upon obtaining the hand of his sister Placidia; and Honorius for the rest of his life quietly fed his feathered followers, leaving his generals to maintain the peace of the Western world.

The only incident worth notice in the remainder of his reign is the exploit of the Asiatic monk Telemachus, who travelled all the way to Rome to protest against the disgraceful barbarities of the gladiatorial games with which the citizens were celebrating their deliverance from the Goths. Finding no one willing to incur the unpopularity, and perhaps peril, of stopping the darling amusement of the people, in his noble enthusiasm Telemachus leaped into the arena to separate the combatants, and either by the command of the præfect, or that of the infuriated assembly, he was torn to

pieces by the bloody gladiators. The impression of this awful scene, of a Christian, a monk thus murdered in the Coliseum was so profound throughout Christendom, that Honorius issued an edict, putting an end for ever to the bloody shows of the mortal combats of men, but permitting the less inhuman, though still brutalizing conflicts of men with wild beasts. And yet amidst the multitude of Roman churches and altars dedicated to martyrs, true or fictitious, not one was ever raised to the only monk that ever died a martyr in the cause of humanity !

The strange adventures of the princess Placidia might form a thrilling romance. The daughter of the great Theodosius was not long the queen of the Goths ; she lost an affectionate husband ; she was dragged in chains by his insulting assassin ; and she was exchanged, in the treaty of peace, for 600,000 measures of wheat. After her return to Italy she experienced fresh persecution in the bosom of her family, for the Emperor conferred her struggling and reluctant hand upon his general Constantius, as a noble reward for his services. But her resistance ended with the ceremony of the nuptials ; and she became the mother of the no less famous Honoria and Valentinian III. After the death of Constantius she was expelled from Ravenna by the base intrigues of a steward and a nurse ; but she returned at the death of Honorius, and reigned for twenty-five years in the name of her son. The character of that unworthy Emperor gradually countenanced the suspicion that the ambitious Empress Mother had studiously trained him up in enervating luxury, and directed his attention from every manly and honourable pursuit. Her two generals Aetius and Boniface, by their skill and valour, may be deservedly named as the last of the Romans. Their union might have supported the sinking Western Empire ; their discord was the immediate

cause of the loss of Africa by the appeal of Boniface to the terrible Genseric, king of the Vandals, to aid him there against his rival.

Genseric was of a middle stature, with a lameness in one leg, which he had contracted by an accidental fall from his horse; his slow and cautious speech seldom declared the deep purposes of his crafty ambition; he disdained to imitate the luxury of the vanquished, but indulged in the stern passions of anger and revenge. As a warrior few could be more formidable in the field; and he was still more dangerous in his dexterous employment of the dark engines of policy to secure useful allies, and to scatter among his enemies the seeds of hatred and division. Hence his name in the destruction of the Roman Empire has risen to an equal rank with the names of Alaric and Attila. The Vandal army, on reaching Africa from Spain numbered only fifty thousand men; but their leader soon increased them by myriads of allies. The wandering Moors at first viewed with terror and astonishment the dress, the armour, the martial pride, and singular appearance of the unknown warriors whose fair complexion and blue eyes, peculiar to the German race, formed a very singular contrast with their own flashing black eyes and olive hue derived from the neighbourhood of the Torrid Zone, but they soon embraced the alliance of the Vandals on hearing that they were enemies of Rome, and together they formed an enormous host, burning to satiate their revenge against the tyrants who had so long oppressed Africa. So, like a sudden sirocco, Genseric swept over in his desolating course the seven fruitful Roman provinces of Africa, from Tangier to Tripoli. Boniface was tortured by the exquisite distress of beholding the ruin which he had caused and could not stop. He checked the enemy by holding out Hippo, now called Bona, for fourteen months and on its cap-



ture, made his way to Ravenna, near which, such was the weakness of Placidia's government, he and his rival Aetius decided their quarrel in a bloody battle, which resulted in the death of the former and ruin of the latter, and Genseric achieved ere long the conquest of Africa.

Amidst this anarchy in the Roman world, women ruling in the name of the boy sovereigns in Ravenna and Constantinople, and overshadowed by no great and renowned rival prelate, rose the celebrated bishop Leo I., a genuine representative of Ancient Rome in sentiment as in birth, imbued with her traditions ; inspired by all her unbounded ambition, her inflexible perseverance, her dignity in defeat, her haughtiness of language, her indefeasible claim to universal dominion, her respect for traditionary and written law, and unchangeable custom, all her belief in her own eternity.

Leo was the first 'Roman bishop known as a preacher' ; many of his sermons are still extant ; they are brief, simple, and severe, and remind us of the Roman prætor authoritatively laying down the law, or the Roman censor sternly reproving the vices of the people. Their practical business-like style forms a strange and forbidding contrast to the florid and desultory, the imaginative and impassioned oratory of the Greek and African preachers. On almsgiving he insists with extraordinary energy. At each midsummer collections were made for the poor, superseding some ancient superstition, probably the games of Apollo, and the devout were urged by Leo to surpass in munificence the customary offerings of the heathen, and thus 'make atonement for their Sins !' His cold and stern denunciation of the whole race of 'heretics,' from Arius down to Nestorius, darkly foreshadow the fiery fate to which his successors would yet expose multitudes whom they had branded with that illomened name. And yet, strange to say, Leo was the first bishop who relaxed the

rigorous discipline of the Apostolic age, which, as a public vindication of the morals of the Church, condemned to exclusion from the LORD's Table, and to public confession and penance, all persons guilty of open and wilful sin. The private confession and penance which this politic pontiff permitted, rendered him highly popular in Rome; but those who joyfully accepted this indulgence little imagined what heavy chains it would soon bind around their necks, and how mighty an engine the *Confessional* would prove for crushing civil and religious liberty. Either the practical mind of Leo disdained it, or the age of saint-worship had not yet fully expanded in Rome, for we find him commemorating one martyr alone, and that with nothing mystic or legendary in the narrative, the Roman presbyter Laurentius, who was put to death by the præfect, during the Dacian persecution, for having exhibited a number of poor widows and orphans, when required to surrender the treasures of his Church. He insists that Rome is glorified by the death of Laurentius as Jerusalem by that of Stephen. Peter and Paul do not stand forth in his sermons, as in those of later Roman bishops, draped with legendary lustre, as sacred objects of worship, but only as the great ancestors, the Romulus and Remus of modern Rome, from whom the Roman pontiff inherited supreme power. He maintained, that because Rome was the capital of the world, that the Prince of the Apostles was chosen to be her teacher, in order that from the head of the world the light of truth might be revealed over all the earth. Some of his attempts to prove Peter the Prince of the Apostles, such as the REDEEMER'S once having used his boat as a pulpit, are transparently frivolous. It is remarkable that he expounds 'the Rock' on which our Lord founded His Church 'as the Rock of the Catholic Faith, the surname of which the Apostle received.'

Optatus, an African bishop, so late as 370, and probably by mistake, called the Apostle Peter the first bishop of Rome, and Jerome, thirty years later, in his loose declamatory way confirmed this new claim of Rome to supremacy, by the extravagant assertion that St. Peter had been for twenty-five years the first bishop there ! Innocent had boldly claimed this Apostolical Succession ; but Leo was the first to turn it to practical account, in his memorable contest with the celebrated Hilary, Archbishop of Arles, whose fame as an orator and excellence as a Christian, deservedly set him at the head of the Church in Gaul. When a refractory Gallican bishop appealed to Rome for protection, Hilary set forth on foot, crossed the Alps without horse or sumpter mule, respectfully presented himself before Leo, earnestly requesting him not to infringe the liberties of the Gallican Churches, and significantly declaring that he came not to plead before the bishop, as accuser or defendant, but only to protest against the usurpation of his rights. Leo haughtily rejected this manly protest ; forced Hilary to fly for his life ; restored the deprived bishop ; and obtained an edict from the weak and wicked young Emperor, denouncing Hilary as a ring-leader of sedition, depriving him of authority out of his own diocese, and enacting that the decrees of the Roman bishops should henceforth be laws in Gaul, and should be enforced by the governors of the provinces. Thus Leo enslaved the Church of France ; for Hilary sorrowfully gave up the contest for liberty against a tyrant supported by the Imperial arms. He died shortly after, and visions of coming glory rejoiced his departing spirit. Degraded as he was by the Roman bishop, the people honoured him with the most splendid funeral hitherto seen in France, and the whole city wept over his tomb. The very Jews were loud in their lamentations for the merciful man ; and the multitude were hardly prevented from tearing

his body to pieces, in order to possess such inestimable reliques. So dear was the memory of Hilary in France, that, as Dean Milman observes, ere long a Roman pontiff astutely annulled the sentence of degradation passed against him by Leo, and by canonizing their beloved bishop, contrived to rivet more firmly upon the French Church the Roman yoke, which that very bishop had suffered so much to avert !

But the grand triumph of Leo's skilful statesmanship was displayed in his dealings with the famous Attila, the all-conquering king of the Huns. For many years the tide of emigration which flowed from the confines of China to those of Germany, had, from time to time, by its continually accumulating weight, burst through the feeble and artificial barriers opposed by the degenerate Roman Emperors, and invading hosts of Goths and Vandals had swept over Roman provinces, and returned home with great spoil, ample bribes from the Emperors, and an eager appetite for the luxuries of civilized life. These Goths and Vandals at length became the prey of the still more terrible Huns, whose hideous, misshapen, scarcely half-human figures, wild habits, strange language, and unknown origin, created such universal panic as made their progress almost a continued triumph. Attila, their leader, deduced his descent from the ancient Huns, who had formerly contended with the monarchs of China. His portrait exhibits the genuine deformity of a modern Calmuck ; a large head, a swarthy complexion, small deep-seated eyes, a flat nose, a few hairs in place of a beard, broad shoulders, and a short square body, of nervous strength, though of disproportioned form. His haughty step expressed his consciousness of peculiar genius, and of superior force ; and he had a custom of fiercely rolling his eyes, as if he wished to enjoy the terror which he inspired. Yet this savage hero was not inaccessible to pity ; his suppliant enemies might

safely depend upon his promise of pardon; and his crafty head confirmed the conquests made by his vigorous hand. A singular event gave him absolute control over his countrymen. The warlike Scythians, naturally enough, worshipped Mars, the god of battles, under the symbol of an iron scimitar. One of the Huns, perceiving that a heifer, which was grazing, had wounded herself in the foot, curiously followed the track of blood, till he discovered, among the long grass, the point of an ancient sword, which he dug out and presented to Attila, who artfully pretended that he had then obtained the SWORD OF MARS, and thus secured a divine claim to the dominion of the world! So Attila, rejoicing in the terrible title, 'The Scourge of God,' led his myriads of fierce warriors from their mountain-homes, and with the speed and fury of a flood, invaded, occupied, and desolated the whole breadth of Europe, from the Euxine to the Adriatic. Ambassadors from all sides rivalled one another in speed and supplications, vainly endeavouring to prevail upon the barbarian to retrace his steps, loaded with Roman gold. Even troops of women marched forth to meet him, to mollify if possible the native fierceness of the Pagan conqueror, chanting songs, and lifting up silver tables loaded with fruits, choice viands, and wines, to refresh him as he sate on horseback; he merely touched the goblets with his lips, and continued his rapid march. The extraordinary offer of her hand made to Attila by the Emperor Valentinian's sister, the Princess Honoria, shows how low the Imperial family had now fallen; and that the savage hero had somewhat of the spirit of romantic chivalry. She had been educated in the palace of Ravenna, and as her marriage might be productive of some danger to the State, she was raised by the title of *Augusta* above the hopes of the most presumptuous subject. The fair princess openly repined at

the importunate greatness which must for ever exclude her from earthly love, and her affection for an Imperial officer caused her exile to the irksome society of the wretched Eastern Court, where monastic austerity reigned paramount. It may be doubted whether impatience of her miserable life, or desire to save her country, caused her to send a faithful servant to Attila, bearing a ring as the pledge of her affection, offering the terrible Hun her hand and immense dowry, and earnestly conjuring him to claim her as his lawful spouse, to whom he had been secretly betrothed. On the discovery of her connexion with Attila, the princess was sent, as an object of horror, back to Italy; her life was spared, but the ceremony of her marriage with some obscure and nominal husband was performed in order to prevent her union with Attila, and then she was immured in a perpetual prison, to bewail the sorrows which she might have escaped, had she not been the sister of an Emperor. That her romantic history endeared her to the Empire, as well as to the barbarian lover who frequently and warmly claimed her as his bride, appears probable from the medal still extant, bearing her pleasing countenance, with the title of Augusta, and on the reverse the legend '*Salus Republicæ*'—the safety of the State. Thus we may account for the haughty and equal defiance which the offended conqueror sent to the Courts of Ravenna and Constantinople, and the salutation with which his ambassador greeted the two Emperors—'Attila, my lord, and thy lord, commands thee to provide a palace for his immediate reception.'

After his campaign in Gaul, Attila repeated his demand for the hand of the Princess Honoria, and her patrimonial treasures; and when it was again rejected or eluded, the indignant lover immediately took the field, crossed the Alps, like a thunder-storm, and invaded Italy. After reducing

Aquileia, Altinum, Concordia, and Pavia into heaps of stones and ashes resistance ceased, and the rich plains of Lombardy submitted to his mercy. When he took possession of the royal palace of Milan, he was surprised and offended at the sight of a grand historical picture which represented the Cæsar seated on his throne, and the princes of Scythia prostrate at his feet. He commanded a painter instantly to reverse the figures and the attitudes; and the Roman vanity was mortified by seeing their Emperors delineated on the same canvas, approaching in a suppliant posture to empty their bags of tributary gold before the throne of the Scythian monarch. It was the fiendish boast of Attila that 'the grass never grew on the spot where his horse had trod;' yet it is a striking testimony to the overruling Providence, which 'out of evil still educes good,' that the destroyer undesignedly laid the foundations of a city, which, in due time, was destined to revive the Arts, and the spirit of commerce. At the extremity of the Gulf, where the Adriatic feebly imitates the tides of the Ocean, a hundred small islands are separated by seven miles of shallow water from the mainland, and protected from the waves by several long slips of land, which admit the entrance of vessels through some secret and narrow channels, thither fled the trembling inhabitants of the ruined cities. Seventy years later Cassiodorus describes the fugitives as still existing in humble poverty, fish their only food, and their only traffic the salt which they had extracted from the sea. Little did he imagine that the ruined men, whom he compared to water-fowl who had fixed their nests upon the bosom of the waves, should prove the founders of 'Beautiful Venice, the Bride of the Sea,' and that travellers, lovers of scenery like myself, on first beholding its gorgeous palaces and magical towers rising from the sea, should deny the evidence of their senses, and fancy themselves entranced and approaching a scene of fairy-land.

Rome trembled at the approach of Attila. The degenerate grandson of Theodosius the Great betrayed his secret design of abdication rather than manfully to face the formidable foe, by hastily retreating from the impregnable fortress of Ravenna to the defenceless capital. It was humiliating to those citizens who remembered Rome's ancient heroes to behold a solemn and suppliant embassy issuing from her gates to deprecate the wrath of Attila. This important commission was entrusted to Avienus, an able and plausible senator admirably qualified for such a negotiation, Trigetius the Prefect, and bishop Leo. The Roman ambassadors encountered the barbarian conqueror on the shores of the Benacus; their persuasion prevailed; he consented to receive the immense dowry of the Princess Honoria, and to retire from Italy. The malady which soon after hurried him to the grave may have been brooding in his constitution, and subdued his fiercer energy of ambition and revenge. His submission has been ascribed to a visible apparition of the Apostles Peter and Paul, who menaced the trembling heathen with a speedy Divine judgment if he repelled the proposals of their successor bishop Leo. But though this legend has been immortalized by the pencil of Raffaele, and the chisel of Algardi, its utter falsehood is clear from Leo's own complaint, that the incorrigible Romans, in their inextinguishable pagan superstition, attributed their deliverance from the terrible Hun to the influence of the stars! The luxury of Rome attracted the long and frequent visits of the dissolute Emperor, and his assassination by an outraged Senator again imperilled its peace, just as Genseric, the Vandal king, was collecting his forces for the invasion of Italy.

Three short years after its deliverance from the Huns, Rome was invested by the Vandals; and again Leo, unarmed at the head of his clergy, went forth to meet the invader,



and persuaded the conqueror to spare the unresisting multitude, to protect the buildings from fire, and to exempt the captives from torture. But that was all which he could effect; the pillage lasted fourteen days and nights; and dearly was Carthage avenged by the Vandals and Moors, who stripped Rome of all its public and private wealth, stooping even to the meaner metals, and sweeping away the copper and the brass with remorseless rapacity. From the Temple of Peace they carried off the plunder of the Jewish Temple, the golden table and the Jubilee silver trumpets, deposited there four hundred years previously by the Emperor Titus. The pagan images which had been still permitted to remain in the Capitol, and its roof of gilt bronze, fell also into the hands of Genseric. The unfortunate Empress, with her two daughters, and many thousand Romans of both sexes, were carried off captive to Carthage, and their anguish was aggravated by the unfeeling barbarians, who, in the division of the booty, separated the wives from their husbands, and the children from their parents.

Antiquarians, as they cast their mournful view over the ruins of ancient Rome, so bitterly accuse the memory of the Goths and Vandals for their wanton demolition, that their names have been a by-word for barbarism. But though the thunderbolts of war might now strike some lofty turrets to the ground, the destruction which henceforth began to undermine the foundations of those massy fabrics was prosecuted slowly and silently, during the following ten centuries, by the Romans themselves. Henceforth their diminished crowds were lost in the immense space of their baths, porticoes, libraries, and halls of justice; and, feeling the decay of their power, they no longer revered the monuments of Consular or Imperial greatness as the immortal glory of the capital; but only esteemed them as an inexhaustible mine of materials, cheaper

and more convenient than the distant quarry ; and they rudely defaced the fairest forms of architecture for the construction of their own strongholds or private abodes.

Leo has been surnamed the Great by the Church of Rome, and certainly his measures and conduct laid deep the groundwork for its spiritual greatness. He was, as Gieseler and Mosheim prove, the first Roman bishop who enabled priests to sit in private judgment on the actions and even thoughts of men ; he was the first who dared to approve of putting sectarians to death ; the first to permit an image of the SAVIOUR to be set up in a Roman Church, that popular one representing HIM as still a child, with his head encircled by a halo, or crown of coloured rays of light, the *nimbus* borrowed from the pictures of the pagan gods. His great predecessor Innocent and he himself—singularly enough each present at one of the sieges and sacks of Imperial Rome—also first strengthened their lofty position by converting deserted pagan temples into Churches, thus still further paving the way to that fusion of paganism with Christianity which ultimately took place in Rome, and enabled modern Romanism to triumph over its ancient rival. But whilst his predecessors, even Siricius and Innocent, had modestly conceded to *all* bishops the privilege of being successors of St. Peter, Leo commanded them as a prince his vassals. He stood aloof, with a lofty dignity truly Roman, from their Church-synods—scandalous scenes of uproar as they had become, through the intrusion of fanatic monks. He was the first to lay down, as a traditionary rule of conduct which has characterized all his successors, the maxim that much of the awe which attached to his office arose from the ancient seat of his authority. So he never left Rome but by delegates, thus preserving his majesty uninsulted and unhumbled, and holding himself ready to act in the superior office of Judge of Appeals.

Hitherto the Roman bishops regarded it as a distinction peculiar to themselves to be judged only by the Emperor, but Leo and the powerful potentates his successors, during the following twenty years, were humbly courted by the Imperial puppets, whom Ricimer, the commander of the barbarian mercenaries, placed on and pulled off the throne of the Cæsars at his pleasure. I have given their names already. With their dull and dismal story I will not weary my kind reader.

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(See Gibbon, iv. 40-296. Milman, *H. C.* iii. 205-240, 263-284, 458, 511. *L. C.* i. 81-221. Milner, 288-384. Neander, iii. 162, 224, 282, 392-449; iv. 18, 396-488, 548. Mosheim, i. 440, 463, 470-480. Gieseler, i. 394-404, 422, 480-454; ii. 40, 64, 126. Catholic Layman, i. 25. King, *I. C. H.* i. 17. Baronius, *An.* 419. Jameson, *Legends of the Madonna.*)

## CHAPTER X.

‘A PRINCE I was, blue-eyed, and fair in face,  
Of temper amorous, as the first of May,  
With lengths of yellow ringlets, like a girl,  
For on my cradle shone the Northern Star.’

—TENNYSON.

### ROMULUS AUGUSTUS, THE LAST EMPEROR OF ROME.

‘ROME will flourish for twelve centuries,’ said an ancient soothsayer to Romulus, as twelve vultures swept over his head whilst he laid the foundation of the city. Singular was the coincidence when the last Roman Emperor, an effeminate and beautiful youth, who united in his own person the names of the founders of the city and of the Empire, Romulus and Augustus, abdicated his imperial authority in the twelve hundred and twenty-ninth year after the Foundation of the City. The unfortunate young prince, whose name was changed into the contemptible diminutives ‘Momyllus Augustulus’ by the satiric Romans, was induced by the bold barbarian chieftain Odoacer, partly by threats, and partly by promises of a villa with a pension, to surrender his Sovereignty to the Senate, who, by an unanimous decree, consented that the seat of universal Empire should be transferred from Rome to Constantinople. ‘The Republic,’ said they, so much did they love the name, though the spirit of freedom was de-

parted, 'had full confidence in Odoacer, and requested the Eastern Emperor Zeno to invest him with the title of *Patrician*, and the government of the *diocese* of Italy.' The deputies of the Senate bore all the Imperial ensigns of the throne and palace to Constantinople; and so gratified was Zeno by their acquisition, by the title of sole Emperor, and by the statues erected to his honour in Rome, that he abandoned the hopeless cause of his abdicated colleague, and entered into a friendly, though ambiguous correspondence with the Patrician Odoacer, who, without assuming the regal title, was the first barbarian who exercised regal power over the city which had once ruled the rest of mankind.

What were the causes of this extraordinary surrender of the Empire of the World?—The effeminate luxury which the historian Ammianus describes as seen by himself amongst the nobles and people at this period, undoubtedly indisposed them to continue the struggle for universal dominion. The possessions of the nobles extended into the most distant provinces, and were farmed out with such practical skill as to realize wealth infinitely exceeding that of the greatest millionaires of our day. Several vain and popular nobles, at this period, celebrated the year of their holding some State office by a festival which lasted seven days, and cost above one hundred thousand pounds! Ammianus describes them all as immersed in one idle round of dissipation, and that of a gross and debasing sort, without our modern refinements or comforts, for 'Augustus had neither glass to his windows nor a shirt to his back.' 'They contend with each other,' he says, 'in the empty vanity of titles and surnames. From a vain ambition of perpetuating their memory, they multiply their likenesses in statues of bronze or marble, covered with plates of gold. They measure their rank and consequence according to the loftiness of their chariots and the weighty

magnificence of their dress. Their long robes of silk and purple float in the wind; and as they are agitated, by art or accident, they occasionally discover the rich tunics beneath, embroidered with the figures of various animals. Followed by a train of fifty servants, and tearing up the pavement, they move along the streets with the same impetuous speed as if they travelled with post horses; and their example is boldly imitated by the matrons and ladies, whose covered carriages are continuously driving round the immense space of the city and suburbs. . . . Sometimes these heroes undertake more arduous achievements; they visit their country villas, and procure themselves, by servile hands, the amusements of the chace. When they have the courage, especially on a hot day, to sail in their painted galleys from the Lucrine lake to their elegant villas on the sea-coast of Puteoli and Caieta, they compare their own expeditions to the marches of Cæsar and Alexander. Yet should a fly presume to settle on the silken fold of their gilded umbrellas, should a sunbeam penetrate through some unguarded and imperceptible chink, they deplore their intolerable hardships, and lament, in affected language, that they were not born in the land of the Cimmerians, the regions of eternal darkness. In these journeys the whole body of the household marches with their master. In the same manner as the cavalry and infantry, the heavy and the light armed troops, the advanced guard and the rear, are marshalled by the skill of their military leaders, or the domestic officers, who bear a rod as an ensign of authority, distribute and arrange the numerous trains of slaves and attendants. The baggage and wardrobe move in front, and are immediately followed by a multitude of cooks and scullions. The main body is composed of a promiscuous crowd of slaves and dependents, under such tyrannical rule, that any one of them tardy in his obedience,

even in bringing hot water, is instantly chastised with three hundred lashes; but should the same slave commit a wilful murder, the master will observe that he is a worthless fellow, and that if he repeats the offence, he shall not escape punishment. At their tables, the birds, the squirrels, or the fish, which appear of an uncommon size, are viewed with curious attention, a pair of scales is accurately applied to ascertain their real weight, and notaries are summoned to attest the event so interesting to epicures. . . . Their profuse and pernicious luxury is stimulated by gaming, or as it is more politely styled *play*, which, with the flattery poured into their ears by parasites, who professionally practise this most profitable of all arts, supplies excitement to their vacant minds. The acquisition of knowledge seldom engages their curiosity, for they abhor the fatigue, and disdain the advantage of study; and the only books which they peruse are the Satires of Juvenal, and the verbose and fabulous histories of the Emperors by Marius Maximus. The libraries which they have inherited from their fathers, are secluded, like dreary sepulchres, from the light of day. But the costly instruments of the theatre, flutes and enormous lyres, and hydraulic organs, are constructed for their use; and the harmony of vocal and instrumental music is incessantly repeated in the palaces of Rome, where sound is preferred to sense, and the care of the body to that of the mind. . . . Yet all this selfish and unmanly delicacy yields to the more imperious passion of avarice. The prospect of gain will urge a rich and gouty Senator as far as Spoleto; every sentiment of arrogance and dignity is subdued by the hopes of an inheritance or even of a legacy; and a wealthy childless citizen is the most powerful of the Romans. . . . If at the baths or theatres they meet any of the agents of their infamous pleasures, they express

their affection by a tender embrace, while they proudly decline the salutations of their fellow-citizens, who are not permitted to aspire above the honour of kissing their hands or their knees.'

The populace was then more abundantly supported in lazy idleness than ever. For their indulgence in sloth, the monthly distributions of corn were converted into a daily allowance of bread; a great number of ovens were constructed, and maintained at the public expense; and at the appointed hour, each citizen furnished with a ticket, ascended the flight of steps which had been assigned to this peculiar quarter or division, and received, either as a gift or at a very low price, a loaf for his family. A regular allowance of bacon was also distributed to the poorer citizens, supplied by the wild swine fattened in the forests of Lucania; and its consumption at this period was estimated at three millions, six hundred and twenty-eight thousand pounds. Oil and wine were also supplied on the easiest terms to the multitude. The baths of Caracalla still supplied sixteen hundred seats of marble and the Diocletian more than three thousand. The walls of their lofty apartments were still covered with curious mosaics, that imitated the art of the pencil in the elegance of design and the variety of colours. The Egyptian granite was beautifully encrusted with the precious green marble of Numidia; the perpetual stream of hot water was poured into the capacious basins through so many wide mouths of massy silver; and the meanest Roman could purchase, with the one-eighth of our penny, the daily enjoyment of a scene of pomp and luxury which might excite the envy of modern kings. From these stately palaces incessantly issued vast swarms of ragged plebeians without shoes and without a mantle. Many went forth to loiter away their days in the Forum or to hear the news and to gamble away the misera-



ble pittance of their wives and children. A vast multitude still considered the Circus as their home, their temple, and from morning to evening, careless of the sun or of the rain, 400,000 often remained there in eager attention; their eyes fixed on the horses and charioteers, their minds agitated with hope and fear for the success of the colours which they espoused; and their happiness hanging on the event of a race. The Coliseum still towered in all its majesty, pouring its 80,900 spectators through its fitly named fifty-two *vomitories*, satiated with its savage sports. The vast magnificent theatres of Rome were at this time supplied with 3,000 female dancers and 3,000 singers, and the masters of the respective choruses. The pantomimes or puppet-shows still delighted multitudes of idlers, by expressing without the use of words the various fables of the gods and heroes of antiquity, the perfection of their art—admirable to this day—which sometimes disarmed the gravity of the philosopher, always excited the wonder and applause of the gaping mob. But Ammianus especially observes that the vices which degraded the moral character of the Romans were mixed with a puerile superstition that disgraced their understanding. ‘They listen,’ he adds, ‘with confidence to the predictions of the sooth-sayers, who pretend to read in the entrails of victims the signs of future greatness and prosperity; and there are many who do not presume to bathe or to dine, or to appear in public, till they have diligently consulted, according to the rules of astrology, the situation of Mercury, and the aspect of the moon. It is singular enough that this vain credulity may often be discovered among the profane sceptics, who impiously doubt or deny the existence of a celestial power.’

Granting that the pagan population of Rome alone is described here by the historian, it is clear that while their utter degeneracy caused them to shrink from further conflict

for the empire of the world, their debasing superstition inspired them with such terror at the approach of the fatal period of the twelfth century that their ancient sooth-sayer had predicted to end their power, that they resigned it without a struggle, almost without a sigh, Rome having fulfilled the twelve fated centuries of her vulture-course.

Jerome's sketches have exhibited still more degeneracy in the professing Christians of Rome. Ammianus describes the Roman bishops as living in 'more than Imperial luxury on attaining the magnificent reward of their successful ambition.' So the old patriotic spirit existed not amongst them to forbid the abdication of the young Emperor. Besides all the old Roman ambition, avarice, and energy found with them a new, a safer, and a grander sphere of action in the vast scheme of subduing the world to their spiritual supremacy; and the extinction of the Roman Emperors was necessary to secure its success. That this is no mere conjecture is clear from the fact, that the Roman bishop Gelasius, at this very crisis, as Mr. Elliott shows, first raised a claim to the SAVIOUR's throne, no longer content with the 'chair of Peter!' He audaciously claimed to be the Vicar of CHRIST, and arrogantly said, 'Hence in divine things, it becomes Kings to bow the neck to Priests, specially to the Head of Priests, whom CHRIST's own voice has set over the Universal Church!' Men so practical and sagacious as the Roman bishop would never have hazarded such claims at sovereignty over all Christendom but that they were conscious of having powerful support. They knew that their stern enforcement of celibacy on their clergy, whilst the great Eastern bishops permitted marriage, had secured them the cordial alliance of the monks, then the most powerful body in the world, though when some of the Egyptian founders first appeared at Rome they excited horror, disgust, and contempt, so revolting was

their squalid filth to a people delighting in baths and perfumes; and so scandalous seemed the practice of shaving off their hair like the Roman slaves, till of each it might be said, as Chaucer of his friar,

‘His crown it shon like any glass.’

Neander truly observes, that the history of Monachism is rich in the instruction it supplies on the nature of the human heart, the development of the mental powers, and the manifold diversities of the inner life. Some few, of naturally placid temperament, had the inward strength and tranquillity necessary to endure the solitary contemplative habits of the cloister. So they realized all the self-complacency of the owner of the one talent in the parable, who prided himself on carefully wrapping it up in a napkin, and burying it safely in the earth, till the return of his austere master. But the vast majority of the devotees who suddenly rushed from busy life and worldly pleasures into the indolent vacuity and extravagant asceticism of a secluded cell, found their mental struggles truly horrible. It was quickly understood that the severest pain could alone subdue or distract the refractory desires that rebelled against this unnatural state of life, so human invention was exhausted in discovery of self-inflicted torments. The Indian faquir was excelled in the variety of distorted postures, and of agonizing exercises. Some monks lived in clefts, and caves, and tombs, never cheered by the light of day; some hung huge weights to their arms, necks, or loins; some confined themselves in cages; some on the tops of mountains exposed themselves to the sun and storm; some contemptuously cast away the superfluous luxuries of clothing, and aspired to reduce themselves to the rude and miserable state, in which the human brute is scarcely distinguishable from the Gorilla. The numerous confraternity of

Anchorets got their name *Boskoi* from their savage practice of grazing in the fields of Mesopotamia with the common herd! Simeon, a Syrian monk, immortalised himself amongst his brethren by the singular invention of aërial self-torture. Within the space of a circle of stones, to which he had bound himself by a ponderous iron chain, on a lofty mountain-top, about thirty miles to the east of Antioch, he ascended a pillar, which was gradually raised from nine to sixty feet from the ground, on which he resisted the heat of thirty summers in that fiery climate, and the biting cold of as many winters. Habit and exercise inured him to stand on his dangerous column without fear or giddiness, and successively to assume different postures of prayer and self-torture. He often prayed in an erect attitude, with his arms stretched out in the figure of a cross; but his most familiar action was that of bending his meagre skeleton from the forehead to the feet, as a penance, so often and rapidly that a curious spectator, after numbering twelve hundred and forty-four repetitions of his gymnastic feat, at length desisted from the endless account—a good specimen of *muscular Christianity* this! Crowds of pilgrims of all degrees, even Emperors, crouched day and night in superstitious awe at the foot of Simeon's pillar, receiving his dull, incoherent words as an oracle. After his death the people of Antioch brought his body in triumph to their city, and the Emperor Theodosius II. vainly implored them to yield the sacred deposit to his custody and homage. The hermit Daniel succeeded Simeon in establishing his fame as a 'martyr in the air;' and mounted his pillar at Anaplis near the Euxine, where, from the coldness of the climate, his body, instead of being burned up with heat, was rigid with frost. Once he humbled himself so far as to descend, and appear in the streets of Constantinople. His

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presence decided the fate of the Empire, and pillar-saints were multiplied.

When monks thus absolutely tasked their imaginations for the discovery of strange self-tortures, it is no wonder that *cruelty* should be the badge of all the tribe. After a sufficient trial, a novice was sworn to pay blind obedience to the superior, who directed his actions, his words, and even his thoughts, by rigid rules, and corrected the slightest offences by disgrace or confinement, extraordinary fasts or bloody flagellations. The slightest disobedience, murmur, or delay, were reckoned deadly sins. Even such expressions as *my* book, *my* cloak, *my* shoes were cruelly punished by the lash; and fanatic abbots thought they did God service by mutilating miserable monks, cutting off their legs or arms, or putting out their eyes—a punishment much less cruel than the tremendous ‘Part in peace’ (the *vade in pace*, the subterraneous dungeon, or sepulchre), afterwards invented for burying monks and nuns alive.

Indeed the merciless spirit of Monachism is manifest, in the ingenuity of its provisions for searing up and destroying all the exquisitely tender sympathies which arise out of the domestic affections. It is with a shudder that we hear their admiring biographers proudly telling us, as acts of the highest and holiest heroism, how the monk Pior at length allowed his sister to see him, but kept his lips and his eyes sternly shut during the whole visit. How Fulgentius, by his ‘religious cruelty,’ at length succeeded in establishing bitter animosity between himself and his mother, though, previous to his assuming the cowl, the most tender affection had bound their hearts together! How nobly the Abbot Mucius triumphed over paternal love, by permitting his little son, only eight years old, to be so macerated, dressed in rags, and

kept abominably dirty, as at length to disgust his own father, who frequently permitted him to be unmercifully beaten by the monks, to prove that his piteous wailing could not force a tear down his own squalid cheeks ; and who at length tossed the child into the river, to show that his earthly ties were for ever broken ! Personal attachments were carefully prevented amongst those monastic slaves, who passed most of their wearisome days alone in their cells, and, at their silent meals, sat bolt upright, enveloped in their cowls, inaccessible and almost invisible to each other. Whenever one was permitted to step beyond the precincts of the monastery, it was impossible to form friendships, for a jealous companion was the guard and spy on his words and actions ; and, after his return, he was condemned to forget whatever he had heard or seen in the world. As by all those superstitious self-tortures they pretended to atone for their sins, we trace in this substitution of their voluntary sufferings for the once offered sacrifice of the REDEEMER, the germs of those worst corruptions of modern Romanism—penance as the voluntary ‘satisfaction’ paid by the sinner to Divine Justice, and ‘indulgences,’ as the mitigation which ecclesiastical superiors could as voluntarily accord to the shrinking and suppliant sufferer. The Pharisaic self-righteousness fostered by Monachism, and excited by the popular applause, was visible even to partially enlightened monks themselves. “Whoever *exalts* himself,” said the monk Nilus to a Pillar-saint, “shall be abased.” You have done nothing worthy of praise, in having stationed yourself on your lofty pillar ; and yet you pant for high praise. Beware ! lest for a moment being extravagantly praised by mortals, and intoxicated by their undeserved applause, you may be obliged hereafter, contrary to your hopes, to appear poor, and blind, and naked before the Eternal

God. Beware ! lest while you raise your body aloft in the air, your soul should grovel on earth.'

When the monk Avitus, with a start of horror, refused the mid-day meal of the sick hermit Marcian, on the plea that he always fasted till evening, his pharisaic boast was put to shame by the meek reply, 'Love is better than fasting; for the former is a law of God, and the latter is only our own voluntary act.' But Fanaticism was the principal characteristic of Monachism, for the vacant hours of the miserable monks rolled heavily along, and, before the close of each day, they had repeatedly accused the tedious progress of the sun, as the monotony of stated hours of prayer and of a kind of idle industry, weaving mats, or plaiting baskets; their silent meals of bread and water, with the Festival luxuries of a little oil and salt, a few peas, olives or a single fig, was only broken by periods of morbid reflection on the state of their conscience, and of mystic meditation upon the nature of God. Their cells were the most dismal abodes imaginable, dark and damp, furnished only with a bundle of rushes, which served as a seat by day and a pillow by night. Even sleep, the last refuge of the unhappy, was so rigorously measured out to these miserable beings, that a rustic horn, or trumpet, as the signal of devotion, repeatedly interrupted the deep midnight silence, and summoned the weary monks back to their own sad thoughts again. From these painful struggles of despondency, despair, and disease, many of those unhappy victims of superstition were constantly relieved by madness or death. Many committed suicide; many rushed back to the world and madly plunged into reckless debauchery, to drown the fearful misery of their troubled consciences. By far the greater number found relief in the wild excitement of fantastic visions, their imagination and

even their senses being deceived by the illusions of distempered fanaticism. Indeed, the monk whose midnight prayer was oppressed by involuntary slumber, and whose waking hours were spent in a dreamy listlessness of mind, the *acedia* (*ennui*) so often deplored by them, might easily confound the phantoms of horror or delight which had flitted across their sleeping and their waking dreams. The scenes among which they settled were usually such as would promote this dangerous tendency to visionary frenzy — strange, desolate, gloomy, fearful, the interminable sea or boundless desert, the mountain immeasurable by the eye, the unfathomable glens, the gloomy forest; in Italy in volcanic regions, either horribly cleft or distorted by ancient eruptions, and still liable at any moment to be desolated by earthquakes or lava-floods; the oppressive, awful stillness only broken by the scream of the eagle or the howl of the wild beast. What a perpetual, what a hopeless conflict must have worn out the energies of the great mass! Christian wisdom and Christian love could find no place in their unsocial system. A morose, and sullen, and contemptuous ignorance could not but grow up where there was no communication with the rest of mankind, and the human understanding was rigidly confined to a very few and never-varying topics. The very effort to suppress certain feelings, without supplanting them by other and higher, has a natural tendency to awaken and strengthen them. The very horror of indulging in *special* sins—instead of that general hatred to all sin, and the love of heavenly things, communicated by the HOLY SPIRIT to the believer's heart—has the very opposite effect, and permits them not to die away into apathy. Monks could fly from their fellow-men, but not from themselves; and the self-centred imagination, ever morbidly alive, and preying on itself, soon generated multiplied phantoms which peopled the desert with worse foes than



men—even hosts of impure, malignant, furious fiends, who took visible form and substance, undiscernible from reality, in their idle day-dreams, or in the visions of their agitated and exhausted spirit in their broken and uneasy slumbers. Visions of the past, of the most exaggerated proportions, tormented them; evil spirits in the guise of beautiful women danced around and beckoned them back to the world again; or in the form of wild beasts of every shape, and of monsters with no shape at all, they howled and yelled and shrieked about them, whilst kneeling at prayer or snatching short uneasy slumbers. Hence the natural interest in the invisible world—appearing as it does in that love for the wild and the wonderful, which peoples the land of every uncivilized nation with gnomes and ghosts, genii and ghouls, fairies and peris—grew into the all-absorbing passion of monastic existence; and, from its very origin down to our own day, monasteries have been the perpetual scene of supernatural dreams, visions, apparitions, trances, communications, and forewarnings, which, as ignorance and superstition became darker and more dense, grew into the awful proportions of revelations from heaven, resuscitation from death, and mighty miracles! So we can trace every novel and anti-Christian doctrine which rose in the dark ages to some monk, and find its divine nature established, not by reference to Holy Scripture, but by some monkish vision or miracle. When we remember that the Emperor Justin and King Theodoric, the two greatest contemporary Sovereigns of the Sixth Century, were totally ignorant of the alphabet—so destructive to literature had been all the barbaric invasions—we can understand that blind credulity which encouraged monkish knaves to emulate monkish madmen, in fabricating the ‘profane and old wives’ fables,’ as the Apostle prophetically termed them (1 Tim. iv. 7), which form the staple of monkish annals. Besides, as

Neander shows, crowds of the very vilest ruffians, outcasts, and mendicants, having nothing to lose, were for ever joining the monastic ranks, scoffing at and disturbing the well-disposed. These furious zealots were ready, at the slightest provocation, in support of a favourite doctrine, or in defence of a popular prelate, to rise in a dangerous insurrection. Statesmen and soldiers absolutely trembled at suddenly seeing hosts of monks, from simple and dreamy enthusiasts, becoming ferocious bands of partisans. At such seasons, instead of remaining aloof in jealous seclusion from the factions of the rest of the world, they rushed down in overwhelming multitudes, armed with knotty clubs and pikes, upon the towns and cities. Then with frantic yells and frenzied gestures, made all the more appalling by their shaggy and savage aspect and supposed sanctity, they, in what they considered a sacred cause, blindly yielded to all the bloodthirsty and turbulent passions of their nature. Then with wild ecstasy in the eagerly prized excitement, and a ferocity that defied opposition, they mingled in the bloody strife of that world which they had abandoned. Amazing swarms of these fierce fanatics, issuing like bees from their cells, incapable of fear, or reason, or humanity, repeatedly defeated the Imperial troops, who fled before their 'scandalous valour' without shame, and acknowledged that they were much less apprehensive of an encounter with the fiercest barbarians. Whilst images of Simeon Stylites, under the form of a guardian angel, stood over every shop door at Rome, Bishop Gelasius feared no opposition to his audacious claim, and it passed uncontradicted, almost unheeded, amidst the general uproar which followed the fall of the Roman Empire in the West.

Britain, lost to Rome in the days of Honorius, was then fiercely invaded by the Saxons; Gaul was subdued by Clovis and his Franks; Spain was over-run by the Visigoths; Africa

was exposed to the cruel insults of the Vandals and Moors ; the victorious nations of Germany were establishing a new system of manners and government in the western countries of Europe ; Italy was wasted by hordes of barbarian mercenaries ; and the majesty of Rome was faintly represented by the princes of Constantinople, the feeble and imaginary successors of Augustus.

But Rome shot a last ray of expiring glory under the firm, wise, and impartial rule of the valiant Ostrogoth Theodoric, who, after his three great victories over Odoacer, assumed the title of *King of Italy*. In the seventh year of his long and peaceful reign he visited the old capital of the world. The Senate and people came forth in solemn procession to salute him as a second Trajan ; and during his residence of six months he daily viewed with fresh curiosity and delight the monuments that remained of their ancient greatness. He frankly confessed, as he imprinted the footsteps of a conqueror upon the Capitoline Hill, that Trajan's Forum and lofty Column filled him with ever-increasing wonder. He computed that a river of gold must have been drained to erect the Coliseum ; and affirmed that the Theatre of Pompey, even in its decay, appeared to him as a huge mountain, artificially hollowed, and polished and adorned by human industry. The numerous aqueducts pouring pure and copious streams of water from the distant mountains, along the gentle though constant declivity of solid arches, amazed him. But he preferred to all its visible wonders, the enormous subterranean channels constructed for the purpose of common sewers, called the Cloaca Maxima, which still distinguished Rome from all other cities and existed in their pristine strength. He praised the statues of metal and marble, of men or animals ; the spirit of the horses which have given the modern name of Monte Cavallo to the Quirinal Hill ; the brazen ele-

phants of the *Via Sacra* ; and Myron's famous heifer, so true to nature as to deceive the cattle as they were driven through the Forum of Peace. Theodoric charged the Præfect, and his lieutenant, the Count of Rome, to protect those works of art which he considered the noblest ornament of his kingdom ; and for their repair assigned a professed architect, the annual sum of two hundred pounds of gold, 25,000 tiles, and the tolls of the Lucrine port. So earnestly desirous was the new King of Italy to secure to his dominions the blessings of peace, and so successful were his measures, that merchants thronged thither from all parts, agriculture flourished, the posts were arranged on a new and effective footing, the Roman Senators again revisited the warm sun and salubrious springs of Baia, and their villas advancing on solid moles into the bay of Naples, commanded the prospect of its various and enchanting scenery. All the Italian cities as well as Rome, especially Naples, Pavia, Spoleto, Verona, and above all, Ravenna his favourite residence, acquired under his reign the useful or splendid decoration of churches, aqueducts, baths, porticoes, and palaces. Such was the extraordinary plenty which the industrious Italians then produced from their grateful soil, that a gallon of wine was sold for three farthings, and a quarter of wheat for five shillings and sixpence. The free intercourse of the provinces by land and water was restored ; city gates were never shut either by day or night ; and the common saying that a purse of gold might be safely left in the fields, was expressive of the conscious security of the inhabitants. Theodoric firmly restrained the bishops of Rome ; caused a decree to be passed by the Senate for extinguishing the scandalous bribery practised at their election ; summoned before his tribunal in Ravenna the rivals Symmachus and Laurence, and confirmed the election of the candidate whom he considered the most

worthy. He sent the Roman bishop John I., in spite of all his reluctance, to enforce toleration on the Eastern Emperor Justin, with the memorable message, 'To pretend to a dominion over the conscience is to usurp the prerogative of God ; by the nature of things the power of sovereigns is confined to political government, they have no right of punishment but over those who disturb the public peace ; the most dangerous heresy is that of a sovereign who separates himself from part of his subjects, because they believe not according to his belief.' Golden words. How singular that Theodoric the first King of Italy and Victor Emmanuel the present King of Italy, of all its rulers, alone used, comprehended, and acted upon them !

Accounts differ very widely as to the result of this mission for securing liberty of conscience, the first and last ever undertaken by a bishop of Rome. Some assert that John placed the crown on the head of Justin, and confirmed him in the rejection of all concessions ; others maintain that he was so far faithful to his mission as to obtain liberty of worship and the restitution of their Churches to the Arians. All that is certainly known is, that on his return, he was received as a traitor by his offended sovereign, who cast him into prison ; and when he sunk into an unpitied grave, Theodoric prevented the Romans from electing his successor by nominating Felix IV. from his palace of Ravenna. This humiliation of the Roman bishops was the last act of Theodoric. He died soon afterwards bequeathing the crown of Italy to his young grandson Athalaric, under the guardianship of his mother Amalasontha. A magnificent monument was erected to the memory of this much lamented King of Italy. It was a chapel of circular form, built on a hill commanding the city of Ravenna, the harbour, and coast ; it was thirty feet in diameter, crowned by a dome of one entire piece of granite ;

and from the centre of the dome four columns arose which supported in a vase of porphyry the remains of Theodoric, surrounded by bronze statues of the twelve Apostles.

Amalasontha was twenty-eight years of age at her father's death ; her rare beauty was animated by all his sense, activity, and resolution ; her measures were directed by the wisdom and celebrated by the eloquence of that able statesman Cassiodorus. So her twelve years' regency maintained the prosperity of Italy, and gained her the respect of all Europe. Unhappily her sex excluded her from the Gothic throne ; and her son Athalaric, in a boyish passion, escaping from her apartment, with tears of pride and anger complained to the Gothic nobles, assembled in the palace at a solemn festival, of a blow which his stubborn disobedience had provoked her to inflict. To the rude clamour of the barbarians claiming the care and education of their king, Amalasontha was compelled to yield ; and soon mourned over the premature grave to which his vices consigned him. Instead of submitting to the laws of her country which decreed that the 'Crown could never pass from the lance to the distaff,' the daughter of Theodoric conceived the impracticable project of retaining the sceptre by marrying her cousin Theodatus, whose covetous and cowardly spirit had made him universally contemptible. Scarcely had Cassiodorus announced to the Senate and the Emperor that Amalasontha and Theodatus had ascended the throne of Italy, than dark intrigues were in active progress against the life of the Queen, and she was imprisoned in the small island of the lake Bolsena.

JUSTINIAN at this period swayed the sceptre of the East, an able and ambitious monarch himself, but mainly indebted for his triumphs to his consort Theodora and his general Belisarius—two of the most singular, and yet opposite characters to be found in the annals of the world. Theodora

was originally a beautiful but infamous actress, the daughter of the keeper of the wild beasts maintained by the Green faction at Constantinople. Before her elevation she was only distinguished for her skill in pantomime, she neither danced, nor sung, nor played the flute; but she excelled in low comic and buffoon characters, and as often as she swelled her cheeks, and complained with a ridiculous tone and gesture of the blows that were inflicted, the whole theatre rung with laughter and applause. On the throne she sat in deep earnest a Queen, whose genius for command and fortitude in peril were brought out into terrible relief by her ruthless nature. The senator or bishop, whose death or exile Theodora had pronounced, was delivered to a trusty messenger, and his diligence was quickened by the menace from her own mouth, 'If you fail in the execution of my commands, I swear by Him that liveth for ever that your skin shall be flayed from your body.' The stoutest generals of the Emperor learned to tremble in her dark and sultry antechamber; and, with the most illustrious personages of the State, to wait there hour after hour till they were admitted to *kiss her feet*.

In the fifth year of Justinian's reign, an insurrection which almost laid Constantinople in ashes, was excited by the hostility of the two factions, known by their favourite colours as 'the Greens and the Blues.' So imminent was the danger that vessels were brought to the garden stairs of the palace, which enjoyed a free communication with the sea, in order to convey the Emperor with his family and treasures to some distant and safe retreat. Justinian was lost, if Theodora had not alone displayed the spirit of a heroine in the midst of a council where Belisarius was present. 'If flight,' she sternly said, 'were the only means of safety, yet I should disdain to fly. Death is the condition of our birth, but they who have reigned should never survive the loss of dignity and domi-

nion. I implore Heaven that I may never be seen, not a day, without my diadem and purple; that I may no longer behold the light when I cease to be saluted with the name of queen. If you resolve, O Cæsar! to fly, you have treasures; behold the sea you have ships; but tremble lest the desire of life should expose you to wretched exile and ignominious death. For my own part, I adhere to the maxim of antiquity, that the throne is a glorious sepulchre.' This firmness in a woman restored the failing courage of the Council, Belisarius and Mundus led three thousand veterans silently in two divisions from the palace; forced their obscure way through narrow passages, expiring flames and falling edifices, and burst open at the same moment the two opposite gates of the Circus, where the insurgents were triumphantly electing to the throne Hypatius, nephew of the late Emperor Anastatius. The carnage which ensued cost the lives of 30,000 persons, and the Circus itself was condemned, during several years, to a mournful silence.

Belisarius in his public and private life vividly resembles our Marlborough. Both owed their rise from obscurity to military skill obtained in foreign service; both retained Court favour by the influence of their wives, for the fair and subtle Antonina enjoyed the confidence of Theodora, as fully as Sarah possessed that of Anne; both were ruled with long and absolute power by their wives; both covered their country and themselves with the glory of many victories; both owed their reverses to the quarrels of their wives with their female sovereigns, and to the jealousy excited by their enemies, whose envenomed malice accused them of traitorous intrigues with foreign powers. Belisarius had already reconquered Africa in one of the most brilliant campaigns recorded in history. He had been honoured with the first triumph ever seen at Constantinople, at which the Vandal



spoils amazed the exulting citizens by their variety, richness, and multitude, and the Vandal King Gelimer, the grandson of the great Genseric, struck them with awe as he slowly followed, clad in a purple robe, still maintaining the majesty of a sovereign,—not a tear escaping from his eyes, not a sigh from his lips, but ever and anon comforting himself with the words of Solomon, ‘Vanity of vanities; all is vanity!’ Belisarius also had won that confidence in his honour which is the mainspring of a commander’s power over his army, by nobly fulfilling his promises to the Vandal king, for whom he obtained an ample estate, and to the Vandal warriors whom he incorporated with his own trusted troops; and his liberal payment for provisions on the line of march had secured the esteem even of his foes.

Justinian, possessing such a general and an army flushed with victory, now resolved on the re-conquest of Italy; and on pretence of mediating, despatched an ambassador thither to intercede for the life and liberty of the queen; but he was charged with secret instructions to suggest how useful her death would be to the Romans. Amalasontha was strangled in the bath by the order or with the connivance of the new king. Justinian’s ambassador received the tidings with a passionate display of grief and indignation; and denounced in his master’s name, immortal war against the perfidious assassin.

Belisarius, at the head of a small force, multiplied by the name, the spirit and the conduct of a hero, easily seized Sicily, and invested Naples by sea and land. Naples, which has now swelled to a great and populous city, was at this period only an elegant watering-place, which, by the gaiety and genius of its inhabitants—who long cherished the language and manners, the accomplishments and vivacity of their Grecian ancestors, and who even to this day ex-

hibit a Grecian gaiety unseen elsewhere in Italy,—attracted the lovers of study, repose, and luxury from the noise, the smoke, and the laborious opulence of Rome. It speedily fell before the arms of Belisarius, whose clemency, in preserving the inhabitants from the horrors of a captured city, conciliated all Italy and gained more for his expedition than the victory itself. Alone he traversed the streets and the Churches, charging his wild soldiers to deal mercifully. ‘The gold and the silver,’ he repeatedly exclaimed, ‘are the just rewards of your valour, but spare the inhabitants; they are Christians; they are suppliants; they are now your fellow-subjects. Restore the children to their parents, the wives to their husbands; and show them by your generosity of what friends they have obstinately deprived themselves.’

At the gates of Rome he was welcomed by the bishop and clergy, Senate and people, exclaiming that ‘Peter’s chair should be no longer profaned by Arian Goths, or the tombs of the Cæsars be trampled on by the savages of the North.’ They forgot that if the Goths were expelled, Italy must sink from an independent and self-governed kingdom, into an obscure and tyrannically ruled province of the Eastern Empire. Theodatus perished in flight, slaughtered as he lay prostrate on the Flaminian Way; but the Goths, resolved to struggle gallantly for Italy, with unanimous applause raised their valiant general Vitiges on their bucklers, hailed him King of Italy, and with the overwhelming force of 150,000 fighting men reached the foot of the Milvian bridge, within two miles of Rome. At the head of one thousand horse Belisarius sallied from the Flaminian gate to reconnoitre, believing that the tower which commanded the narrow passage was still in the hands of his own troops; but the garrison had deserted and he was suddenly surrounded by innumerable squadrons of the Goths, whom he supposed to be

still on the other side of the Tiber. The fate of Italy depended on his life ; and the deserters pointed to the noble charger which bore him on that memorable day. ' Aim at the bay horse,' was the universal shout. Every bow was bent, every javelin directed, against Belisarius ; but he was strong, active, and dexterous ; shafts and darts glanced off his polished armour like a hail storm off a rock ; and on every side he dealt his deadly blows. His faithful guards imitated his valour, and fought for his life ; and the Goths, after the loss of a thousand men, fled before his irresistible assault. They were pursued to their camp by Belisarius and his band ; but multitudes prevailed, the tide of battle turned, and the Goths drove back their assailants to the very walls of Rome. It was reported that the general was slain, and the city gates were shut in panic. Indeed he was no longer recognizable, his face disfigured by sweat, dust, and blood, his voice hoarse, his strength almost exhausted ; but his unconquered spirit still remained. He imparted that spirit to his comrades ; and facing round they made a last desperate charge upon the Goths, which routed them as perfectly as if a new army had issued from the city. The Flaminian gate was thrown open to a real triumph ; but it was not before Belisarius had visited every post, and provided for the city's safety, that he could be persuaded by his wife and friends to taste the needful refreshments of food and sleep.

During the whole following year the Goths besieged Rome, and Belisarius displayed indefatigable diligence, and marvellous fertility of resources, so as to make his gallant little band of five thousand protect the immense circle of the city ramparts against an army of 150,000 fierce assailants. The antiquarian may yet discern the materials of ancient architecture used by the indomitable general in restoring the city

walls, which were perfected, except in a chasm between the Pincian and the Flaminian gates, which the superstition of both Goths and Romans left under the guard of St. Peter, exposing a fissure in the upper part of the wall, which is visible to the present hour! A chain was drawn across the Tiber; the arches of all the aqueducts were made impervious; the tomb of Hadrian was then first used as a citadel, the superb statues decorating its dome, torn from their lofty pedestals, were hurled into the ditch upon the heads of the besiegers. In the days of the Republic, as often as the Senate decreed some specially dangerous campaign, the Consul denounced hostilities to the uttermost by unbarring in solemn pomp the gates of the brazen temple of Janus, containing a hideous idol of human form, with two faces directed to the East and West. Christianity had now been two hundred years *legally* established in Rome; but that temple was still standing in the Forum, and a fruitless effort to turn the huge double gates of brass on their rusty hinges revealed the scandalous secret that the idolatry of Ancient Romanism still survived. To each of his lieutenants Belisarius assigned the defence of a gate, with the charge that, whatever might be the alarm, they should steadily adhere to their respective posts, and trust to himself for the safety of Rome. His consummate skill and eagle-eye discerned every favourable opportunity for sallies, and as he selected the ground and the moment; as he sounded the charge, by the horse trumpet of solid brass, or the retreat by the foot trumpet of leather and light wood; his soldiers advanced or retired, chanting his name and victory.

The Goths, with tremendous violence, began the siege, but repulsed at their first general assault, they resolved to reduce the city by famine, and, notwithstanding all the foresight of Belisarius, such was the scarcity that the besieged ate

sausages of mules' flesh, the granaries were nearly exhausted, and the whole Campagna wasted with fire and sword. Suspicious of treachery, Belisarius redoubled his vigilance; often changed the officers at the gate, the patrols, the watchwords; and by the aid of lights, music, and dogs, he occasionally supplied repose to his almost worn out veterans. A letter was intercepted written in the well-known characters of Sylverius, the bishop of Rome, promising the King of the Goths, that the Asinarian gate, adjoining the Lateran Church, should be secretly opened to his troops. Sylverius was summoned to the general's quarters in the Pincian palace, and alone admitted to his presence, the clergy who accompanied him being detained in the ante-chamber. Antonina was reclining on an elegant couch, and her husband submissively sitting at her feet. Accused by credible witnesses and the evidence of his own handwriting, the bishop was speechless; and Antonina imperiously asked him, 'What have we done to you Sylverius, and to the Romans, that you should betray us to the Goths?' In an instant the pall—his episcopal badge—was rent from his shoulders, he was hurried into another room, stripped of the rest of his dress and clad in the squalid garb of a monk. Vigilius, a deacon of bad repute, who purchased the office by the immense bribe of two hundred pounds weight of gold, and by implicit adoption of the heretical tenets of the Empress, was elected bishop. Belisarius, having thus crushed the conspiracy, applied earnestly to Justinian for aid. His wife Antonina herself, in disguise, boldly traversed the outposts of the enemy; overtook the Oriental forces and their long train of waggons laden with provisions; convened a council of war at which it was resolved, so to expand the ranks of the advancing small body, and to surmount the adverse current of the Tiber with sails and oars, that the Goths might believe they saw the

vanguard of an immense fleet and army which already covered the Ionian Sea and the plains of Campania. Vitiges made one more general assault, was repulsed, and fled. Belisarius and Narses pursued; recaptured city after city, until Ravenna itself capitulated; and Vitiges was a captive.

Notwithstanding his inflexible loyalty in rejecting the crown of Italy, offered by the Goths in admiration of his valour and esteem for his clemency, Belisarius became an object of jealousy to Justinian; was recalled; was enthusiastically received by the populace of Constantinople; and filled the Byzantine palace with the treasures of the Gothic monarchy. Again he routed the Persians and saved the East; but he somehow offended Theodora, and perhaps the Emperor; was fined in the enormous sum of one hundred and twenty thousand pounds; and would have lost his head but for the intercession of Antonina with the Empress! His office, then, was Count or Master of the royal stables; and yet when the new King of the Goths, Totila, had defeated eleven Imperial generals, Belisarius—a hero on the banks of the Euphrates and the Tiber, a slave in the palace of Constantinople—was sent again to deliver Rome, which was now in the hands of the Gothic king, who demolished one third of its walls, in different parts; decreed that the city which cost the Goths so dear should be changed into a pasture for cattle; and commanded engines and fire to be prepared to overturn and consume the most stately works of antiquity.

Belisarius was already near Rome when he heard of this fatal decree, and his firm and temperate remonstrance suspended its execution. He warned the Goth not to sully his fame by the ‘destruction of those monuments which were the glory of the dead and the delight of the living.’ Totila was persuaded, by the advice of an enemy, to preserve Rome as the ornament of his kingdom, or the fairest pledge of peace and re-

conciliation. But he did not show equal mercy to its people; he dragged the Senators in his train on his march into Apulia, and so scattered the citizens, with their wives and children, that during forty days Rome was abandoned to desolate and dreary solitude, only relieved by the tramp and the wassail shout of its Gothic garrison. By an almost incredible deed of daring, Belisarius recovered the city, and raised once more the Imperial standard on the Capitol. The scattered citizens returned; the walls were repaired; the ditch was cleared out; iron spikes were profusely scattered to prevent a sudden charge of Gothic cavalry; instead of the demolished gates, which could not be suddenly restored, each entrance was guarded by a Spartan rampart of brave veterans; and Totila's army was thrice repulsed in three general assaults. If Justinian had then sent strong and seasonable succours to Belisarius, many subsequent calamities would have been spared; but after a long silence, the general received orders to leave a sufficient garrison in Rome and to retreat into Lucania; and after a year of inglorious inactivity he retired with a sigh from Italy—Antonina, who had been sent to Constantinople to solicit support, having obtained, after the death of the Empress, permission for his return.

Ten years Belisarius languished in obscurity; but when all Constantinople quaked at the blast of the Bulgarian trumpets, the ungrateful prince and people summoned him once again to resume the armour in which he had conquered Carthage and defended Rome. The aged hero displayed all his youthful valour, skill, and resources. He collected the horses of the royal stables, of private citizens, even of the Circus; his presence rallied the failing courage of the people; but well he knew that 'while ten thousand voices of volunteers demanded the battle, he should depend upon the firmness of his three hundred fellow-veterans.' His last battle was a more

brilliant victory than any he had ever won ; Constantinople welcomed its deliverer with enthusiastic acclamations of joy and gratitude ; but when he entered the palace the courtiers were silent, and the Emperor, after a cold and thankless salutation, dismissed him to mingle with the train of slaves. Lord Mahon argues with learning and ingenuity in favour of the celebrated story of the tragical fate of Belisarius, that he was deprived of his eyes, and reduced by envy to beg his bread, 'Give a penny to Belisarius the general !' So the famous statue, in the Louvre, of a noble old soldier in a sitting posture, begging alms with an open hand, may truly represent the fall of the veteran General after forty years' service, and present a dread comment of the Divine injunction, 'Put not your trust in princes.' Certain it is that after his death, instead of the public funeral, the monuments, and statues due to his memory, the residue of his treasures were immediately confiscated to the Emperor, except a pittance with which Antonina betook herself to a convent.

Scarcely had Belisarius retired from Italy than Totila was again master of Rome. He had asked in marriage a daughter of the king of France, as Gaul was now called, and was so stung by the just reproach that the king of Italy was unworthy of his title till he was in possession of Rome, its chief city, that he surrounded it with his whole force, and captured it through the treachery of some Isaurian soldiers of the garrison. He now respected Rome as the capital of Italy ; restored the Senate and citizens to their rights ; and, in the robe of peace, supplied the Romans with their ancient objects of desire, 'bread and their Circensian games.' As the Gothic king was everywhere victorious, made the great Theodoric his model ; offered terms of peace to Justinian, and engaged to employ his arms in defence of the Empire,



land which the Romans possessed bear ineffaceable records of that mighty people, but, as has been distinctly exhibited by modern jurists, there was no period in the history of the great nations of Europe in which the principles of Roman law, and its very forms, did not survive.'

When Justinian aspired to decide the Theological questions then agitated in Christendom by his famous Three Chapters, he summoned Vigilius to his aid, who set out loaded with the imprecations of the Romans, and assailed by volleys of stones. 'May famine,' was the universal shout, 'and pestilence pursue thee! Evil hast thou done to us; may evil overtake thee wherever thou art!' A strong guard was needful to protect him as far as Sicily. It was at a perilous crisis that he arrived at Constantinople, for there was a division in opinion between Justinian and Theodora, and so ambitious and double-minded a man as Vigilius, so trammelled by his obligations to the base and secret adoption of all Theodora's heretical opinions, could not, if he would, act a fair and conscientious part. He three times pliantly yielded, and then as desperately resisted the theological dictatorship of Justinian; three times condemned the Three Chapters, and three times recanted his condemnation. So scandalous became his tergiversations, that Africa, with all her old dauntless pertinacity in defence of the TRINITARIAN doctrine, and even his own clergy repudiated him as a renegade. But Vigilius so astutely carried his point in over-persuading the Emperor to resume the re-conquest of Rome, that the general Narses was commissioned to rekindle the Gothic war from its ashes. The key of the public treasures was put into his hand, that his preparations might be so vast as to crush all opposition. The unlimited powers denied to the hero were granted to the favourite, who by diplomacy and arms again defeated Totila, and Justinian once more received the keys of Rome—which,

under his reign, had been *five* times taken and recovered—with the bloody robe and gem-crowned hat of the slaughtered king. Italy was one vast field of carnage during the two following years ; but the banner of Narses waved victorious at their close. Trias, the last king of the Goths, bit the dust, the invading host of Franks and Alemanni were routed ; and after a reign of sixty years, the throne of the Gothic kings was filled by the Exarchs of Ravenna, as representatives of the Emperor, and rulers of the humbled province of Italy.

Bishop Vigilius did not live to enjoy his bloody triumph. Having protested against Justinian's usurpation of Ecclesiastical authority, and excommunicated all who received the Imperial edict, he found that he had gone too far, that a Byzantine despot was not to be thus boldly bearded in his own capital, and panic-stricken he fled for refuge to a church. He was pursued by the Imperial officers ; they attempted to drag him forth from the altâr by the feet, but he clung to it with death-like grasp, and being a large and powerful man, the pillars of it gave way, and the whole fell crumbling upon him. He was dragged through the city with a rope round his neck, reproached with his crimes and cruelties ; then committed to a common prison, and kept on bread and water. He fled by night over the sea to Chalcedon. The Emperor condescended to capitulate, revoked his edict, and left the Three Chapters to the decrees of the Council. Vigilius dared not confront the host of Eastern bishops at the Council ; but he protested against their condemnation of the Three Chapters. The wrath of the Emperor was again kindled ; Vigilius was once more seized, and sent into exile to the dreary and solitary rock of Proconesus. There his courage again failed ; reports of preparations for sending a new bishop to Rome so alarmed him that he again recanted, was

called to Constantinople, made full submission, obtained leave to return to Rome, but died on the voyage, and his companion Pelagius, having shown himself very pliant to the Imperial doctrines, was, by the order of Justinian, raised to the bishopric of Rome.

He and his successors in the Roman See, to the time of the famous Gregory I., were all appointed by the order, or influence, of the Eastern Emperor. Hence their obscurity and obedience amidst the awful desolation inflicted on unhappy Italy by Justinian's twenty-years' war with the Goths, and his reconquest of Rome. The contemporary historian Procopius, and eyewitness, for he was the secretary of Belisarius, computes the depopulation of Italy as above the total sum of her present inhabitants. He tells us that acorns were used in place of bread; that he had seen a deserted orphan suckled by a she-goat, and makes our blood run cold by describing a way-side inn, where seventeen travellers were lodged, murdered, and eaten by two women, who were detected and slain by the eighteenth!

This was the period in which the terrible Alboin king of the Lombards achieved the conquest of a great part of Italy. Fierce, beyond the example of the surrounding German tribes, the Lombards delighted to propagate the belief that their heads were formed like the heads of dogs, and that they drank the blood of the enemies whom they vanquished in battle! At the solicitation of Justinian, they left their own homes on the banks of the Elbe, to reduce the cities on the coast of the Adriatic. But the spirit of rapine soon tempted Alboin to cross the Julian Alps, and to seize on the fruitful but then desolate plains to which his victory communicated the perpetual name of *Lombardy*. Terror preceded his march, he found everywhere, or he left, a dreary solitude. The portraits of Alboin and his chiefs may still

be seen in the palace of Monza, near Milan; and our curiosity almost yields to horror as we gaze on their savage aspect and strange apparel. Their heads were shaven behind, but the shaggy locks hung over their eyes and mouth, and a long beard represented the name and character of the *Langobard* nation. Their dress consisted of loose linen garments, after the fashion of the Anglo-Saxons, which were decorated, in their opinion, with broad stripes of variegated colours. The legs and feet were clothed in long hose and open sandals; and even in the security of peace a trusty sword was constantly girt at their sides. It was a coarse allusion to the white bands which enveloped their legs, that drew forth the insulting remark of a barbarian chief to Alboin, 'The Lombards resemble, in figure and in smell, the horses of our Sarmatian plains.' This is a very favourite sarcasm of the popes against the Lombards, towards whom they have ever felt an instinctive aversion as their natural foes. The Lombard kings have often retorted with Alboin, 'Add another resemblance, you have felt how strongly they kick.'

And yet after the rage of battle had subsided, the Lombards sometimes surprised their vanquished foes by a gentleness and generosity truly characteristic of 'Father-land.' Pavia, which had been strongly fortified by the Goths, resisted the new invader for three years, whilst the rest of Northern and Central Italy submitted almost without a blow. Alboin bound himself by a tremendous oath that age, and sex, and dignity should be confounded in a general massacre. Famine at length enabled him to execute his bloody vow, but as he was entering the city-gate his horse stumbled, fell, and could not be raised from the ground. One of his attendants, from compassion or piety, boldly exclaimed—'This is the hand of God! This betokens the wrath of heaven

against shedding innocent blood.' The conqueror paused: relented; sheathed his sword; and, peacefully reposing himself in the palace of Theodoric, proclaimed to the trembling multitude that they should live and obey.

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(See Gibbon, v. 77, 251, 296-322; vi. 34-45, 125-165, 221-246-283, 338. Milman, *L.C.* i. 248-252, 293, 350. Neander, iii. 316, 320, 340-348; iv. 262. Gieseler, ii. 128-130. Mosheim, i. 456-462. Elliott, *Horæ Apol.* iii. 142. Mahon, *Life of Belisarius*, *passim*. Ammianus, l. xiv., xxviii. Anster, *Introd. Lec. Roman Civil Law*, pp. 11, 12, 30.)

## CHAPTER XI.

'Some voice thrills in mine ear like breath  
Of virgin song, and fair young Love  
Is seen his golden plumes to move  
Over the dim gray land of Death.

'My heart is like a temple dim,  
Down whose long aisles the moonlight floats,  
And sad celestial organ notes,  
Hover, like wings of Cherubim,

'Touch'd by some unseen hand, around  
The marble figures of the Dead ;  
But at this hour no living tread  
Is heard, no disenchanting sound.'

—TENNYSON.

### GREGORY I., THE LAST BISHOP OF ROME.

MONACHISM owes much of its marvellous power and perpetuity to the certainty with which, as soon as ever the evil nature of the system becomes visible and intolerable, either new sects, or *Orders*, arise, or the old are remodelled and regulated by some able or ardent monk, under a different name, dress, or rule. Such was the reform wrought out in Monachism by the celebrated BENEDICT, just as the ferocious fanaticism of the monks was disgusting the few scholars and men of sense, still lingering on the borders of the Dark Ages, and captivated them for a thousand years. We trace the

story of his life from the hand of the last Roman bishop, and, though it will read like a fairy tale, I must sketch it off, so intensely is it characteristic of Gregory himself, and so faithfully does it reflect the spirit of the age.

Benedict was born at Nursia, near Spoleto, at the close of the Fifth Century, of respectable parents, who, rejoicing at the bright promise of his genius, took him to Rome for his education. 'But preferring,' says Gregory, 'a holy ignorance to the perilous study of letters,' he ran away from his parents, and, accompanied by his faithful nurse Cyrilla, he secreted himself in a hermit's cell two miles from the town of Subiaco. Here his fame was at once established by the astounding miracle of making span-new an old stone sieve, commonly used by peasants of that part of the country for making oread, when he found Cyrilla weeping over it one day, in vexation at having broken it by her negligence. The wondering rustics came from far to see the sight, and hung the sieve over their Church door. Benedict shrunk from their praises; by the aid of a monk named Romanus he let himself down across the face of a precipice into a deep cavern, which is still shown to pilgrims as a hallowed place, overhanging the Anio, that roars beneath in a deep ravine, clothed with the densest forest, and looking on another wild precipitous rock. In this cold and dismal dwelling the softly and delicately nurtured boy lay sheltered from the pursuit of his sorrowing parents and the equally dangerous praises of the peasants, for three long years. His scanty food was supplied by Romanus, who stole it from the monastic stock, and let it down by a rope, to which a small bell was attached to give notice of its coming. To an imagination thus prepared, what scene could be more suited to nurture a disposition to see visions and wonders, than this wild and romantic scene? 'So the Evil One,' says Gregory very solemnly, 'often

visibly appeared to Benedict ; once broke the rope by which the charity of Romanus supplied his food ; once came in the shape of a blackbird, and flapped him over the eyes with his wings, so as almost to blind him ; and very often drove him forth in distraction, rolling his naked body upon the brambles and sharp points of the rocks, by assuming the unforgettten image of a fair girl who had captivated his boyish love, and which he could only banish by these strong agonies which convulsed his torn and bleeding frame.' When some adventurous shepherds at last discovered his retreat, they mistook the poor youth for a wild beast. So horribly was he disfigured by woe and want that his aspect was scarcely human.

The more suicidal the self-torture of the hermit, the greater was esteemed his sanctity ; and Benedict was unanimously chosen for their head by a convent of monks in the neighbourhood. But his austere rule roused the hostility of some wicked monks, who attempted to poison him ; and lo ! the cup containing the poison burst asunder in his hands ; and, with a solemn reproof, he withdrew from their guilty abode. The fame of Benedict grew with his years. It was reported that wells of water had broken out at his bidding, on the thirsty summits of the Apennines ; and quickly in this poetic district, on these peaks and rent clefts, under the oaks and wild chestnuts round Subiaco, twelve monasteries arose, each containing twelve votaries ; for Benedict sagaciously considered that less or more than this number led to negligence or discord. The fame of these new institutions soon spread to Rome, and some of the nobles joined the young and popular fraternities ; others sent their sons thither for the benefit of religious training. Maurus, afterwards so celebrated in monastic annals as the St. Maur, was one of those young nobles, who became the trusty friend, assistant, and successor



of Benedict. But, singular to say, in all monkish annals, 'low virtue' constantly comes in collision, as it were, with 'high virtue.' Florentius, a neighbouring secular ecclesiastic, was envious of Benedict, and attempted to poison him by a loaf of bread, which he sent him as a present; but a raven, at the command of the monk, flew away with the infected food; the guilty Florentius perished; and Benedict, under the guidance of two bright angels, bent his way to that famous site of his order, Monte Casino. Near the summit of that picturesque hill still stood a temple of Apollo, amid its sacred grove, and the pagan peasants still brought their offerings to their ancient god. Benedict and his followers destroyed the profane and stately edifice, broke the idol, overturned the altar, and cut down the grove. Then followed a fierce conflict with the Enemy of mankind, at whose order the obstinate stones refused to permit themselves to be moved, till the monk prayed and wrestled, and overcame the instigator of their rebellion. Even after they were cemented in the solid wall they spitefully fell and crushed the builders, who were healed by Benedict's intercession.

At length the first great Benedictine monastery was perfected, and great was the amelioration which it introduced into the monastic system. Three virtues made the sum of its discipline, silence, humility, and obedience—extending, in the strong language of the rules, 'to impossibilities.' Three occupations divided their day and night, prayer, study, and manual labour. Their rules of abstinence were far less rigorous than of old. Abstinence from the flesh of four-footed animals was perpetual; but it was gravely argued that fowls partook of the nature of fish, having sprung originally from the waters, so their flesh was not prohibited. The usual food was vegetable broth, fish or fowl, bread and a small measure of wine. Fasts were made less frequent, as from Easter to

Pentecost there was no fast, and thence to September, a fast only on two days a-week. The monastery was to contain within its walls the mill, the bakehouse, and everything necessary for life. As the young monks were actively engaged in agriculture for the support of their house, fertility smiled round it on every side; and as the old monks were kept ever busy in transcribing manuscripts, literature took shelter under their roof-tree. So the wild heath and the mountain crest were deserted by the Benedictines for fertile valleys, watered by clear and deep streams, where their agricultural pursuits might flourish; or for the vicinity of cities where their learning might secure honour and emolument. At first their monasteries were humble edifices. Mabillon gravely tells us, as 'a golden legend,' that the convent built by the desire, but not according to the humble notions of Waltruda, modestly ashamed of its magnificence, fell of its own accord and gave place to a lowly building. But as they increased in wealth they gradually grew in spaciousness and splendour. Every monastery sent forth its colonies incessantly, the limit to their numbers and multitude of candidates making them multiply with greater fecundity than the population of the most flourishing cities, and obliging them to throw off their redundant brethren to new settlements. So ere long there was no city in Christendom without its Benedictine abbey, and the fairest spots in every land were selected for their settlements. The labours of the monks in planting, in cultivation, in laying out the sunny garden, or hanging the hill with trees, added much to the picturesque grace of these favoured retreats even in England, where, in general, the lover of landscape scenery will find the most convenient, the most fertile, and most peaceful spot crowned by the ivy-mantled ruins of a Benedictine abbey. Their services to literature were far less profitable than to agricul-

ture, for the monks chiefly employed their time at the desk in transcribing 'golden legends,' or in fabricating those enormous lies of phantasmagoric and legerdemain miracles of their founders, their visions, and their unnatural austerities, which absolutely stunted and stultified the intellect, whilst introducing the very worst corruptions of Christianity. It is easy to see what an argument in favour of the new doctrines of purgatory and transubstantiation was educed from their story of the punishment which fell on certain nuns, who had been excommunicated by Benedict for the unbridled use of their tongues. They died and were buried in the church; but when the Sacrament was next administered, at the voice of the deacon commanding all who did not communicate to depart, the bodies of the talkative nuns rose from their graves and walked out of the Church! Benedict, in pity, commanded the Lord's Supper to be celebrated for them as an 'Oblation;' and ever after they rested quiet in their graves! Then the Benedictines took such 'a rascally delight,' as Barrow calls it, in flogging their scholars, that few, but those designed for the priesthood, sought instruction under their rod; so they contrived to keep all the scanty learning of the Dark Ages in their own hands. And yet they claim the credit of keeping alive the flame of learning during the 'times of this ignorance,' though it was their own hands that put the 'light under a bushel,' obscured it with legendary lore. Mabillon, the most learned Benedictine monk of the seventeenth century, put forth all his antiquarian skill to cloud the bright noontide of the Reformation and of letters, by his famous work in defence of the genuineness of that silly relic of mediæval superstition, 'The Holy Tear of Vendome.' A Benedictine abbot once complaining to Archbishop Anselm, a man by no means remarkable for meekness, that the boys brought up under his instruction, were 'perverse and incor-

rigible, stupid and brutal, though the monks never ceased beating them day and night,' was thus rebuked, 'For mercy's sake why do you thus annoy them? Are they not your fellow-creatures? But admit that your intention is to form them to good manners by blows and stripes; did you ever know a goldsmith form a plate of gold or silver into a goodly shape only by hammering it? Does he not gently press it, and gently tap it, and with gentle touches smooth and shape it? So must ye if ye want to accomplish your boys in good learning bestow on them the alleviation of kindness, as well as the use of stripes.' 'We endeavour,' the Abbot sternly rejoined, 'to *force* grave and good manners upon them.' Centuries after, Erasmus tells us, that whenever he dined with a Benedictine abbot a few boys were always served up to be flogged for the dessert. One day the Abbot called up a meek, gentle boy of ten years old, who had lately been earnestly commended to his care by a tender mother, ordered him to be soundly flogged for some pretended fault which the child had never committed, and saw him flogged till the victim was fainting under the scourge; 'Not that he has deserved this,' said he aside to Erasmus, 'but it is fit to humble him.'

The Benedictines as sternly as ever prohibited natural affection, considering it dangerous to an all-absorbing passion for their Order. So one of their stock legends tells of a boy-monk, an amiable little fellow, who loved his parents, and, stealing forth to visit them, was suddenly struck down dead, and his body could not rest in the grave, till Benedict placed the consecrated elements upon it. Benedict himself was proudly paraded as a pattern of perfection, for his hard-hearted treatment of his sister Scolastica, who, as a female Benedictine, had been equally with him successful in attracting and ruling the minds of recluses of her own sex; and founded

almost as many convents, as he had monasteries. The brother and sister, with the most perfect harmony of interest and devotion, had their natural affection so suppressed by the stern spirit of monasticism that they met but once a year, and that for a cold and brief interval on business. In her dying moments, she slightly yielded to womanly tenderness and for once extorted from her severer brother an unwilling breach of his rule of never passing a night out of his own cell. She was sinking fast and entreated him to rest for the night in her convent that he might be with her in her struggle with the last Enemy, and close her eyes. He sternly refused and rose to depart, but Heaven was more indulgent than the monk, for as she bent her head in prayer, says Gregory, the serene sky was overcast, lightnings and thunders flashed and roared around, the rain fell in torrents. 'The Lord have mercy upon you, my sister!' cried Benedict, 'What have you done?' 'You,' she faintly replied, 'have rejected my prayers; but the Lord hath not. Go now if you can.' They passed the night in monastic exercises. Benedict was rewarded for his severity by a vision, in which he saw his sister's soul soaring to heaven in the shape of a dove. His disciples declared, says Gregory, that on the eve of his own burial a golden path suddenly opened to their eyes strewn with flowers and lighted with lamps, which led direct from his cell to heaven; and that they exclaimed, 'May we follow our master along this heavenward way!'

GREGORY, by his ability and influence, completed the Benedictine system, and I now turn to his story. He blended civil and ecclesiastical nobility in his descent, for bishop Felix II. was his ancestor in the fourth degree, and his father was one of the wealthiest senators of Rome. His birth and ability had raised him to the dignity of Præfect of the city, but at his father's death he threw up his office; devoted his

wealth to the foundation of monasteries, and entered into one of them at Rome. Here his austerity and study so shattered his health, that but for the friendly compulsion which obliged him to indulge in a little relaxation and refreshment, he must have perished. According to their custom in cases of excessive austerity, the monks ascribed miracles to Gregory, whose fame soon spread throughout Rome; and his monastery was the perpetual scene of preternatural wonders after he became abbot. It was rumoured that his charity was tried by an angel in the garb of a shipwrecked sailor, whose successive visits exhausted all he had, except a silver vessel set apart for the use of his mother; the sturdy beggar, on receiving this, revealed himself in a robe of light, diffusing a fragrance as of the concentrated sweetness of all flowers! The severe discipline which Gregory imposed upon himself hardened into cruelty in his dealings with those under his relentless rule, and it was whispered that the devils were the executioners of his wrath. Fugitive monks were constantly revolting to the world, and these fiendish familiars of Gregory seized and dragged them back to punishment. The most singular story of this discipline is that of the monk Justus, related by Gregory himself. Before becoming a monk, this unfortunate man had practised physic, and during the long illness of Gregory the care and skill of Justus were severely tasked in saving his life. On his own death-bed the poor monk betrayed to his brother the secret that he possessed three pieces of gold, in violation of the monastic law as to the community of property. Gregory determined to punish the offender with such severity as might for ever prevent the Benedictine brotherhood from indulging in such a crime. After a long search he found the guilty money concealed in some medicine, triumphantly exhibited it to the panic-stricken monks; prohibited any one but himself from approaching

the dying bed of the new Simon Magus ; loaded the expiring Justus with denunciations of deep damnation ; and cast out his corpse upon the dunghill, with the three pieces of gold, the whole convent shouting aloud, 'Thy money perish with thee!' There unhonoured and accursed the body lay rotting. Often as the brotherhood looked upon the sad sight and trembled, Gregory warned them that the spirit of the unabsolved outlaw was tortured in fiery burnings ; and not for sixty days did he, through the offering of the Lord's Supper, release the troubled ghost, which then came to thank him for its repose ! But Gregory's spirit was too powerful to slumber long in monastic lethargy. In the market-place of Rome he one day saw some beautiful and fair-haired boys exposed for sale. He inquired from whence they came. 'From Britain.'—'Are they Christians?'—'They are still Pagans.' 'Alas ! that the Prince of Darkness should possess such lovely beings ! That such beauty of countenance should want that better beauty of the soul !' He asked of their nation. 'Angles,' was the reply. 'Truly, they are angels ! From what province?'—'That of Deira.' 'Truly they must be rescued *de Ira* (from the wrath of God). What is their king's name?'—'Ælla.' 'Yea,' said Gregory, 'Alleluia must be sung in the realms of that king.' He instantly conceived the bold project of subduing to the Church that beautiful race and their remote isle ; obtained the consent of the bishop, and was three days' journey from Rome when he was recalled by the popular excitement, which broke out into open insurrection at his departure.

Bishop Benedict made him his Secretary, and entrusted him with a diplomatic mission to Constantinople, which he executed with great ability ; and found time to compose his famous 'Moralia,' or Exposition of the Book of Job, which he interprets as an allegory, containing in its secret sense,

the whole theory of the Church and its sacraments, and an unrelenting condemnation of sectarians! Jerome had introduced this mode of wresting the Holy Scriptures from their natural sense in favour of his unscriptural notions on fasting and celibacy. Thus he not merely discovers that Adam and Eve were expelled from Paradise in consequence of a breach of fasting, that for the same reason the disobedient prophet was slain by the lion, but sees the king of beasts setting a glorious example of fasting, as he neither ate the carcase nor harmed the ass! He proves the excellency of celibacy by the manner in which the numbers thirty-fold, sixty-fold, and an hundred-fold in the parable of the good ground, were expressed in the Roman manner of calculation on the fingers. 'Thirty,' he says, 'signifies the married state, it being expressed by a joining or embrace between the thumb and fore-finger of the left hand. Sixty, being expressed by bending the thumb of the same hand under the first two fingers, denotes the bowed down and depressed state of widowhood. But by a hundred, which is expressed by a circle formed by the thumb and fingers of the right hand, is represented the crown of holy virginity.' Gregory surpassed his master in torturing the Holy Scriptures from their plain and literal sense into a new allegorical interpretation for the glorification of his Church. He discovers that 'the seven sons of Job mystically mean the twelve Apostles, and therefore the clergy, because *seven* is the perfect number, and, multiplied within itself—three by four, or four by three—it produces twelve!' He maintains that 'Job's three daughters are the faithful laity who worship the Trinity!' He traces mysteries in his sheep and camels, oxen and asses, and identifies his friends from the latent meaning of their names with pestilent heretics who must be cut off. Dean Milman justly observes, that 'according to Gregory's



license of interpretation, there is nothing which might not be found in any book that ever was written ; there is no single word, no syllable, which may not mean everything ; no number which may not have relation to the same number, wherever it may occur, to every divisible part of such number. This departure from the plain teaching of the Holy Spirit, is no less than to make a new revelation to mankind.'

After Gregory's return to Rome a pestilence broke out, of which the bishop was the earliest victim ; and the multitude loudly clamoured for their favourite's election. He fled in disguise from the dangerous honour to a distant forest, where his retreat was discovered, it was said, by a light which hovered over his head like a pillar of fire. The pursuers exultingly seized the fugitive, hurried him to the Church of St. Peter, and forcibly consecrated him bishop of Rome. Though 'greatness was thrust upon' Gregory, he remained an austere, superstitious monk to the end of his days. In his person Monachism ascended the throne of the proud pontiffs of Rome, of which it has kept possession to this day. And yet this practical bishop of Rome unswervingly pursued the path which would have been chosen by her most crafty and ambitious statesmen ; he was the best financier that ever managed her revenues ; and the most subtle, skilful, and successful pontiff that ever organized her Church and extended her spiritual sway.

Rome had now reached the lowest period of her depression. Amidst the arms of the Lombards, and under the despotism of the Greeks ; by the removal of the seat of empire, and the successive loss of all her provinces, the sources of public and private opulence were fast drying up. The lofty tree under whose shade the nations of the earth had so many centuries reposed, was now deprived nearly of all its leaves and branches, and the sapless trunk was about to be left to wither

on the ground. Like Thebes, or Babylon, or Carthage, the name of Rome might have been erased from the annals of the world, if Gregory had not now, with wonderful ingenuity, laid hold of a vague rumour that the Apostles Peter and Paul had formerly been martyred in the Circus of Nero, and that two old tombs existed in Rome, containing their sacred relics !

The origin, as Neander remarks, of relic-worship, was in the perversion of the noble feeling with which the early Christians, full of sure and certain hope of a glorious resurrection, no longer shrunk, like the pagans, from contact with a believer's dead body as if it were defiling, but looked upon it as the organ of a purified soul, destined to be transfigured in a higher form of existence. Hence the repose of the martyrs' bodies was watched with the faithful memory of love and reverence ; the honoured remains were gladly received, and deposited in newly built churches, so as to connect them by an outward historical bond with the holy lives of the early Christians. But so inclined is man to place an undue value on the instrument—which should simply point us to Him who employs it—that this natural reverence for the slumbering remains of the LORD's redeemed ones became a germ of idolatry, which in favourable seasons unfolded and spread till the noxious 'plant was rooted up as not of the Father's planting.' Hence the passion in the Dark Ages, upon which we have already entered, not only for worshipping the relics, real or fancied, of martyrs, and of placing them under the altars of churches, but also of frequenting their tombs, seeking miraculous cures.

Dr. Salmon gives us a very amusing instance in St. Viarius, who was worshipped in Portugal, and whose shrine was frequented with great success by those suffering from lumbago or sciatica. At last a learned and honest old monk, hearing of

the saint's repute, and wishing to include his life amongst others that he was writing, examined the supposed tomb, and discovered that it was only a tablet commemorating the merits of the pagan Roman road-makers, and that the illiterate priest had mistaken the Latin word for roads, 'viarium,' for the name of a martyr. So the tomb was shut up, to the great discontent of the people, who loudly prayed that the monk's own loins might pay sore for his interference. Unhappily Gregory took quite the opposite course with the two old tombs at Rome, which had the equally equivocal reputation of being the resting places of the relics of the Apostles Peter and Paul. All the silly old wives' fables that could be collected about miracles wrought at them found a place in Gregory's letters to the Queens of Christendom. Led by his wondrous tales, multitudes of pilgrims from the East and West flocked to adore the Apostles' relics, as the Palladium of New Romanism; but their shrines were guarded by miracles and invisible terrors which forbade the scrutiny of any honest monk, if such could be found at Rome. It was gravely announced by Gregory, that it was fatal to touch, it was dangerous to behold, the bodies of the saints; and those who presumed to disturb their repose were affrighted by visions or punished by sudden death. The unreasonable request of the Eastern Empress, who wished to deprive the Romans of their sacred treasure the head of St. Paul, was rejected with the deepest abhorrence; and Gregory affirmed, most probably with truth, that a piece of linen which had been sanctified in the neighbourhood of his body, or the filings of his chain, which it was sometimes easy and sometimes impossible to obtain, possessed an equal degree of miraculous virtue. The epistles of Gregory teem with accounts of the particles of iron taken from the Apostle's chain, and, after being inserted in keys and crosses of gold, bestowed by him on his royal

and noble partisans in every country. The devotion with which they were received was exceedingly enhanced by Gregory's grave assurance that these precious iron particles had been miraculously granted by the chain for their special benefit! But, as Gibbon observes, 'the pontifical smith who handled the file must have understood the miracles which it was in his own power to operate or withhold; a circumstance which abates the superstition of Gregory at the expense of his veracity.'

It was by his diplomatic skill in the use, or rather the abuse, of these pretended relics that Gregory succeeded in defending Rome more effectually from a barbarian invasion than ever Belisarius had done, and in even converting his fierce foes into firm and generous friends. In the second year of his Episcopate, Agilulf, King of the Lombards, appeared with a vast tumultuous host before the gates of Rome. Gregory at first tried curses against the 'sacrilegious impiety of those most wicked men,' which startle us by their exact similarity to those thundering denunciations which so recently re-echoed from the seven-hilled city against Victor Emmanuel and his Lombards. Still the city was beleaguered, and in such peril, that Gregory abruptly closed his 'strange mystic lectures to the people on Ezekiel's Temple by these sad words, 'If I must now break off my discourse, ye are my witnesses for what reason, ye who share in my tribulations. On all sides we are girt with war; everywhere is the imminent peril of death. Some return to us with their arms lopped off, some are reported as captives, others as slain. I am constrained to cease from my exposition, for I am weary of life. Who can expect me now to devote myself to sacred eloquence, now that my harp is turned to mourning and my speech to the voice of them that weep?'

Marvellous to say, in the very hour of the Lombard king's

conquest, the wily bishop of Rome subdued the conqueror! Theudelinda, the Queen of the Lombards, was daughter of the Bavarian king Garibald; and so renowned for her wit and beauty that the Lombard king Autharis sought her hand in marriage. Impatient of the negociation, the ardent lover escaped in disguise from his palace; visited the Court of Bavaria in the train of his own embassy; and at his audience informed Garibald that he was a friend of Autharis, who had trusted him with the delicate commission of making a faithful report of the charms of his future spouse. Theudelinda was summoned to undergo this important examination, and after a pause of silent admiration, the chivalrous prince hailed her as Queen of Italy, and humbly requested that, according to the custom of the nation, she would present a cup of wine to the first of her new subjects. By the command of her father she obeyed; Autharis received the cup in his turn, and in restoring it to the princess, he secretly touched her hand, and drew his own finger over his face and lips. In the evening Theudelinda imparted to her nurse the indiscreet familiarity of the stranger, and was comforted by the assurance that such boldness could only come from the King of Italy himself, who, by his beauty and courage, appeared worthy of her love. The ambassadors were dismissed. No sooner did they reach the confines of Italy than Autharis, raising himself on his horse, darted his battle-axe against a tree with wonderful strength and dexterity. 'Such,' said he to the astonished Bavarians, 'such are the strokes of the King of the Lombards.' The marriage was dissolved at the end of the year by the death of Autharis; but Theudelinda had so endeared herself to the nation, that she was permitted to bestow, with her hand, the sceptre of the Italian kingdom on Agilulf, over whom her influence was consequently unbounded. To the Lombard Queen, Gregory secretly appealed for aid in this

extremity ; to her he presented one of his most precious amulets, with his famous 'Dialogues,' which are so full of the most wild and fantastic legends of the miracles wrought with Roman relics by Roman monks, that even Romish historians reluctantly class them amongst 'pious frauds.' When Dupin *naively* admitted that he did not think any one would vouch for the truth of *all* these miracles, Gibbon retorted by the home personal question, which Lord Bacon calls 'a scoff or *dry blow*,' that reduced him to silence—'I should like to know *how many* of them the learned historian believes himself.' But they had the desired effect upon the superstitious Queen, who was charmed with Gregory's magical amulets ; believed his miracles ; shuddered and grew pale at his story of the monk who witnessed, in vision, the doom of the great humbler of the Roman bishops, King Theodoric, whose soul was plunged, by those ministers of Divine vengeance, the bishop of Rome and the Patrician, into the Volcano of Lipari, one of the flaming mouths of hell. She hastened to exert all her influence to establish peace, and won over her husband and his whole nation to submission to the Roman bishop. Agilulf also restored all the wealth which he had plundered from the Church, reinstated the ejected bishops and raised those who had remained in their sees from poverty and degradation to dignity and wealth.

However, Gregory's character as a statesman is darkly stained by his base adulation of the cruel Emperor Phocas, and his unchristian triumph over his own benefactor the murdered Maurice. But that unfortunate Emperor had connived at, if he had not sanctioned, the arrogant assumption of the title of UNIVERSAL BISHOP by John, the patriarch of Constantinople. Perhaps Gregory sagaciously foresaw that the new Emperor, in antagonism to the old, would have espoused the Roman side. In his celebrated letter to

Maurice, Gregory had thus protested against the very title which all the Pontiffs of Rome since his times have blasphemously usurped :—‘ Am I defending my own cause ? Is this any special injury to the Bishop of Rome ?—It is the cause of God, the cause of the whole Church. And who is he that usurps this uncanonical dignity ? The prelate of a see repeatedly ruled by heretics. Let all Christian hearts reject the *blasphemous* name.’ To the Empress, Gregory writes branding the presumption of John as ‘ a sign of the coming of ANTICHRIST ;’ and compares it ‘ to that of Satan, who aspired to be higher than all the angels.’ John is thus solemnly warned against assuming that ‘ blasphemous title,’ by the last Roman bishop that ever appeared without claiming it as his own proudest prerogative :—‘ Verily when Paul heard that some said, I am of Paul ; others I am of Apollos ; others, I am of Cephas, he exclaimed, with the strongest abhorrence of this rending of the body of CHRIST, by which His members, so to speak, were attached to other heads, “ Is CHRIST divided ? Was Paul crucified for you ? Or were ye baptized in the name of Paul ? ” If then he could not tolerate that the members of the LORD’S body should be arranged in parcels as it were, and become attached to other heads than to CHRIST, even though these heads were Apostles, what wilt thou say, who, by assuming the title of “ Universal Bishop ” seekest to subject all CHRIST’S members to thyself ? What wilt thou say to HIM, the Head of the Universal Church, at the final judgment ? In truth, what is Peter, the first of the Apostles, other than a member of the holy and universal Church ? What are Paul, Andrew, and John, other than heads of single communities ? And yet all subsist as members under the one only Head.’ He then in a tone of righteous indignation severely rebukes John for ‘ usurping the title of universal bishop—a title belonging to

our SAVIOUR alone, the common though invisible Head over all, so it should not be applied to any human being.'

But Gregory's 'king-craft' was chiefly shown in his astute adoption of the old Imperial policy of enslaving the Romans by ample supplies of 'food and shows.' The misery of the times had reduced the nobles and matrons of Rome as well as the populace to accept, without a blush, their bishop's benevolence, and on the four great festivals he liberally divided their quarterly allowance to the nobles, to the clergy, to his domestics, to the monasteries, the Churches, the cemeteries, the almshouses, the hospitals of Rome, and to the rest of the diocese, as well as to three thousand virgins and to many bishops, who received their food and raiment from his hand. On the first day of every month he distributed to the populace, according to the season, their stated portion of corn, wine, cheese, vegetables, oil, fish, fresh provisions, bacon, clothes, and money; and his treasurers were continually summoned to relieve in his name the instant distress of the sick and helpless, of strangers and pilgrims, by the bounty of each day and of every hour. His skill as a Financier supported this enormous expenditure, and the voluminous account of his receipts and disbursements was kept above three hundred years in the Lateran palace, as the model of Roman skill in the management of money matters—although our political economists might justly protest against his system as scandalous bribery and demoralization of the people by wholesale incentives to continuance in lazy mendicancy. The Roman See possessed immense estates in Italy and France, in Africa and Asia, and many of Gregory's Epistles to his agents are still extant, which are filled with prudent instructions to abstain from all doubtful and vexatious lawsuits, to preserve the integrity of weights and measures, to grant every reasonable delay to the farmers, to reduce the



capitation-tax of the slaves of the glebe, who purchased the right of marriage by an arbitrary fine, and also for the purchase of English slaves of eighteen years old, to be trained as his missionaries to their countrymen. His minute attention to business is amusingly seen by his complaint, 'that of all his valuable steed in Sicily, his agent had only sent him a sorry nag and five asses. The horse he could not mount because it was so wretched a brute, the asses because they were asses.' Compulsion had been vainly tried for the conversion of the Jews in France; but Gregory tried bribery, promising that their rents, as Church-tenants, would be lowered if they conformed to the Church, and astutely remarking, 'Even if their conversion be not sincere, that of their children may be so.' As a tacit reproof to John, Gregory styled himself 'Servant of the servants of God,' a title savouring of 'the pride which apes humility,' and which has ever since been borne by the popes of Rome.

But it was as a bishop that Gregory chiefly left the impress of his master-mind upon the Roman Church, in its organization, ceremonial worship, and doctrines. The city and its suburbs were divided by him into thirty parishes, superintended by sixty-six presbyters, of whom the leaders were called *Cardinals*, or principals. These parishes were formed into seven districts, each with its hospital, or alms-office, superintended by deacons, of whom the chief was called *Archdeacon*. Some churches were called *Stations*, as at stated times the more solemn services were celebrated there. Thither on such occasions Gregory rode in high state, escorted by his deacons and other officers, was received and robed by the Archdeacons with great ceremony; conducted to the choir with incense and seven candlesticks borne before him; psalms were sung as he proceeded to his throne behind the altar; the more solemn portions of the service were con-

ducted by himself, and it generally continued above three hours. The music, the animating soul of his whole ritual, was under his own especial care. He introduced a new mode of chanting, which still bears his name, much richer than than that of Ambrose at Milan, for its harmony comprised the eight *modes*—or fifteen chords—of the ancient theatrical music, whilst the solemn simplicity of the Ambrosian was confined to four. He formed schools of singers, which he condescended himself to instruct. His psalter, the couch on which he reclined while practising psalmody, were long preserved at Rome, as well as the rod with which he chastised any one that sang out of tune in the antiphonal chanting, by which the different sides of the choir answered to each other in responsive verses. He constantly ascended the pulpit himself, and evermore the burden of his preaching was woe, woe, woe to the godless people of Rome, whose multiplying calamities were the harbingers of the Last Day.

Each individual bishop, as Mosheim shows, according to his own views and the circumstances of the country, originally prescribed to his own flock such a form of public worship as he judged best. Hence the great variety of ancient liturgies, of whose simplicity and majesty our Reformers so wisely availed themselves in compiling our Prayer-Book. Gregory so enormously enlarged the Roman liturgy that a *part* of it filled 880 folio pages! Special services for the worship of saints and angels, and new rites and ceremonies, invented by him to supersede the festivals and pompous shows and processions of Ancient Romanism, swelled his ritual to this enormous bulk. Forgetful, as Neander observes, that the LORD's Supper represents, in a lively form to the believing heart, the redemptive suffering of CHRIST, whereby man becomes reconciled to God, and the communion between heaven and earth is restored, Gregory, representing the spirit of his age,

attributed to it a certain *magical* power. He believed that whenever the priest presents this offering, heaven opens at his voice, the choirs of angels appear, the high and low, the earthly and heavenly unite, the visible and invisible become one! As a result of this supposed magical power, he attributed to it a magical efficacy capable of operating upon both the living and the dead. Hence his stories—in his Dialogues—of its power in loosing the chains of a far-distant captive, when offered up for him by his faithful wife, and how a morsel of this heavenly bread supported the shipwrecked mariner's life, and saved it from 'the cruel hungry waves!' As for its magical influence on the dead, he availed himself of the purgatorial idea of Ancient Romanism, which had been adopted by the New Platonists, that the lingering infection of human wickedness was to be burnt out with fire. St. Paul had spoken (1 Cor. iii. 13) of the fire of coming persecution which should *try*, not purify, every preacher's *doctrines*, not individual souls; and this is the strange and doubtful mode in which Gregory wrests that simple statement to the establishment of his novel doctrine—'Now though this may be understood of the fire of tribulation in this life, yet *if* any one understand it of a fire of future purgation, he ought carefully to consider what person is saved by fire, not one who builds on CHRIST the foundation, lead or iron, that is heavy and grievous sins, but wood, hay, stubble, that is small sins, namely, idle words, inordinate laughter, &c., such as the fire can easily consume. But none shall obtain any purgation by fire for his small sins, unless he has merited by his good actions in this life that he shall obtain it there.' He suggests, that by the offering of the Lord's Supper, that the efficacy of His Passion was appropriated to the dead, and made a means of delivering them sooner from those purifying fires and sending them to heaven. He rests his main *proofs* on mar-

vellous legends of ghosts visiting monks by the glimpses of the moon, and describing purgatory to them with the mode of release, by the offering of the Lord's Supper. He admits the novelty of the doctrine, and excuses it by the rapidly approaching end of the world, 'the next world is touched by our very nearness to it, and we see more clearly into its secrets.'

Hence the LORD's Supper—now called the *Mass*, from the words by which non-communicants were dismissed, '*Ita missa est*'—was celebrated by Gregory with a mysterious magnificence and pompous apparatus that filled the congregation with awe, and drove them to surrender to the clergy the pledges of CHRIST's love, and to accept spurious relics of saints and martyrs in their stead. Priests were now solicited by valuable presents to say Masses for the repose of the dead, and private Masses became common. Some voices faintly complained that the very liturgy itself implied the people's share in the Supper; and asked, 'How can the priests, where none are present, say "Lift up your hearts," or "The Lord be with you"? And can the priest at his private Mass plead the SAVIOUR's promise, "Where two or three are gathered together; in My name, there am I in the midst of them?"' The continually increasing Jewish view of considering the Christian ministry as the priesthood of the Old Testament made the error more captivating, and more dangerous to the sincere, whilst the enormous power and profit which the new doctrine gained for the ambitious and avaricious secured an immense majority in its favour. But Gieseler remarks, that as yet there was no notion of a change in the sacred elements themselves.

Ancient Romanism had long captivated the multitude by the gorgeous attire of its priests and the artistic excellence of the images of the gods and heroes of its worship, which

taxed all the genius of Phidias and Praxiteles to animate them with loveliness and grandeur. Gregory quite surprised them in the variety of colours and exquisite workmanship of the vestments of his priests, suited to the different seasons, fasts, and festivals. Churches were also soon more grandly decorated with images and paintings than the temples of Ancient Romanism, when Gregory publicly censured Serenus, the bishop of Marseilles, 'for his rashness in destroying images,' because 'some were wisely to be retained in Churches for the sake of those who could not read Holy Scripture, that at least by contemplation of them they might come to some knowledge of Scripture facts, a use of images very important, especially to the rude nations recently converted from paganism'—'Amongst whom,' adds Neander, 'the abuse of them in idolatry might most easily creep in.' When Vigilius objected to the *heathen* practice of some of Jerome's followers, in placing lighted lamps and burning wax tapers in broad daylight before the tombs of the martyrs at Rome, the monk admitted that 'some of the laity and pious women might in their *simplicity* thus *err*, but that their feelings should be respected.' Gregory went much farther, says Gieseler, and even adopted into the Church particular heathen rites as well as their sensuous use of incense, lighted lamps, and wax tapers.

Gregory's answer to a lady-in-waiting of the Empress, shows him utterly ignorant of the Gospel plan of salvation. 'It was not,' he said, 'till the last day of her life, where no more time was left to weep over her sins, that she ought to have the assurance that they were forgiven. Till then, distrustful of herself, trembling for herself, she should always fear on account of her sins, and seek to cleanse herself from them by daily tears!' Hence from Gregory came a tormenting sort of monkish asceticism more strongly than ever into the Roman

Church, dark and dismal views of life, and attempts at maintaining self-righteousness by work-holiness, and superstitious observances, all forced into existence by the oppressive feeling of this uncertainty. Equally inspired by his monastic spirit was his rage against the marriages contracted by the clergy, which was so rabid that he took every occasion to insult and oppress the 'criminals.' He even inveighed against the marriages of the laity; and in a sermon yet remaining on the text, 'Many are called but few are chosen,' he bitterly bewailed the 'woful *fall* of one of his own aunts, who had been guilty of the sin of marriage!'

Gregory, true to the traditionary policy of the Roman bishops, astutely manœvered so as to bring into submission to himself, under semblance of union, nearly all the Western Churches. Spain had been just delivered from the lingering pollution of Arianism at his election to the Roman See, by the eloquence and fidelity of Massona, the bishop of Merida. When the Arian king threatened the noble bishop with exile, he calmly replied, 'If you know where God is not, command your servants to conduct me thither.' A thunder-clap pealed in the heavens, and Massona solemnly exclaimed, 'That is the KING of whom we and you should stand in awe. He is not a king like you.' The orthodox bishop of Rome instantly claimed alliance with the reformed Spanish Church, and 'exercised over it the authority of the Holy Apostles.'

GERMANY now almost universally paid homage to the bishop of Rome. Notwithstanding the proud consciousness of their own superior prowess as warriors, the fierce Teutonic tribes could not enter into the dominions of Rome, cross the grand Roman bridges, march along the great Roman roads, encamp before the walled cities, with their towers, temples, basilicæ, forums, aqueducts, baths, and above all, the Christian Churches, now everywhere grand and magnificent, without

awe at the superior intellectual power of the Romans. It was natural to connect this superiority with the Church of Rome ; so that the conquerors were predisposed to embrace its religion, especially in its now semi-paganised form. But the Teutons were chiefly brought to accept Modern Romanism when they found that it held forth the gentle SAVIOUR of mankind as a God of battle, that since the time of Constantine the Great, the Cross, the symbol of Christian Redemption, glittered on the standards of the Roman legions, and they judged that the God of the Romans must be the mightiest, as worshipped by the former masters of the world. Arian teachers were generally their first instructors ; but Arianism having no foot-hold in 'Great Rome,' and its followers being often vanquished in battle, the Teutons cast it off, and entered the Orthodox Church.

FRANCE was still more subject to the Roman See, and for similar reasons. Clovis the founder of the Frankish monarchy was a pagan, only the chief of 4,000 warriors, but full of adventurous daring and unmeasured ambition. His wife Clotilda was an orthodox Christian, and possessed great influence over her husband's counsels. How strange it is that the annals of France exhibit the same political power exercised ever since by the wives and mothers of her sovereigns, although they are disqualified by the Salique Law from swaying its sceptre ! When Clovis found the tide of battle turning against him in his great conflict with the Alemanni near Cologne, he bethought himself of Clotilda's God, and made a solemn vow, that if he gained the day, he would be baptised as a Christian. He routed the Alemanni, slew their chief, and became sovereign of the vanquished tribe. Clotilda kept him to his word, and summoned the nearest orthodox bishop to baptize him. The ceremony was performed with the utmost pomp, in order to impress the bar-

barians with reverence for their prince's new religion. The Church was hung with embroidered tapestry and white curtains; odours of incense, like airs of Paradise, were diffused around; the building blazed with countless lights; relics of supposed miraculous power were paraded on costly shrines, glittering with gold and jewels. The choir burst forth in rich Roman melody as the new Constantine knelt in the font to experience the *magical* power now attributed to baptism, to be cleansed from the leprosy of his heathenism. 'Fierce Sicambrian,' said the bishop, 'bow thy neck! Burn what thou hast adored, adore what thou hast burned!' His obsequious warriors at once declared their readiness to be baptised like their king. During a subsequent conference the bishop dwelt much on the barbarity of the Jews in the death of our SAVIOUR. Clovis was moved, but not to tenderness—'Had I and my faithful Franks been there, they had not dared to do it.'

This conversion of the Franks—if such it may be called, for Neander shows that Clovis merely seized on Christianity to colour his ambitious schemes of conquest over the Arian Visigoths of France—was an important event in its remote as well as its immediate effect on France, Rome, and England. It paved the way for the Western Empire of Charlemagne, for the temporal sovereignty of the popes, and for the subjugation of England to the yoke of Rome. Henceforth the successors of Clovis imitated him too in 'fiery zeal' for the extension of the Roman Church; and Clotilda's example has been faithfully followed by French queens and empresses in using all their seductive influence in favour of the Roman pontiffs, and they have been equally rewarded by precious filings of the Apostle's chain. Thus it was that by the aid of his devoted ally Bertha, the fair French bride of the Saxon king Ethelbert, Gregory saw the visions of his own early



spiritual ambition, for the subjugation of Britain, fulfilled by his missionary the Benedictine monk Augustine.

When the Roman missionary and his forty monks landed in England, they sought not out the oppressed Romish Christians, but their pagan conqueror. They entered not into Ethelbert's presence as suppliants, but with imposing grandeur, in full procession and gorgeous array, bearing silver crosses and silken banners, emblazoned with images of the SAVIOUR and the saints, and the wild woods re-echoed their stentorian Gregorian Chant. The Saxon king, with a vague awe of the name of Rome, and afraid of the boasted *magical* efficacy of the reliques which they bore, met them with his nobles on the greensward in the open air—imagining that he would thus be safe from their spells and incantations. Augustine so skilfully conducted the interview, that Ethelbert permitted him to officiate in Queen Bertha's church, became his convert, and multitudes pressed forth for baptism when he publicly gave notice that all who entered the Church of Rome might expect his special favour. Gregory's directions to the monk for securing his advantage displays his subtle policy. The pagan 'temples were all to be preserved, and *reliques* placed upon the altars in place of the idols, because so long as these ancient places of devotion exist, the people, through the force of habit, will repair to them.' The old idol feasts were to be changed into feasts of those saints whose reliques were deposited in them. Care was taken that the uproarious jollity which formerly prevailed on those festal days, should suffer no abatement in the huts of boughs, which as of old were still erected round the temples; for 'by reserving something for men's outwards joys, you will more easily induce them to relish internal joys.' Stranger still, as Gieseler shows, Gregory permitted the continuance of the heathen rite of sacrificing oxen to their 'demons,' but under

another form. On the martyrs' days they also were to slaughter animals, but to the honour of God, and they were to 'eat and be merry,' for, 'it is impossible by severity to succeed, and he who seeks to climb a mountain must rise not by leaps but by steps!'

A very touching story is told of the first interview between the native Christians and the Roman monk—now created Archbishop by Gregory. It took place under an old oak-tree on the banks of the Severn, and the Britons in perplexity heard of the new ceremonies and usages which they were expected to adopt. They asked time to consider; and sought advice from one of their ancients. He recommended them to obey the Roman if he were a true servant of God. 'How shall we know that?'—'If he be meek and humble of heart, by that know that he is the servant of God.' 'And how shall we know him to be meek and humble of heart?'—'Seeing that you are the greater number, if he, at your coming into the synod, rise up and courteously receive you, then you shall perceive him to be an humble and meek man; but if he shall despise you—despise you him again.' At the second conference, 'his lordship,' says Fuller, 'was so high, or rather so heavy, or rather so proud, that he could not find in his heart, a little moving of his body to declare a brotherly and humble heart.' So the Britons rejected the proud Roman's yoke, but as they were retiring he hurled at them the dark menace 'That if they disdained to preach with him the way of life to the English nation they should suffer by their hands the revenge of death.' The speedy massacre of twelve hundred of the British clergy, was an awful foretaste of Rome's vengeance in later days against our noble Reformers. The liberty-loving Saxons soon wearied of the stern monastic rule of the Roman bishops, whom they determined to expel and to return to their old idolatry. Laurentius, the successor of Augustine, saved the Roman Church from this disgrace and

loss by a strange device. He gave out that he would follow the exiles to France on the morrow, and ordered his bed to be laid that night in the Church of St. Peter and St. Paul. In the morning he went into the presence of the king and, instead of taking leave, threw off his habit, and exposed his back and shoulders bloody and waled with stripes, which he affirmed St. Peter had inflicted upon him, on the previous night, for his wish to abandon his flock! The awe-stricken prince instantly reinstated the Roman Church, and loaded its prelate with gifts.

Such was the 'knavish trick' to which the wily Roman resorted and which Romanizers and lovers of legendary lore dignify with the name of miracle. That the Saxons believed it is no proof of its genuineness, for Neander shows the marvellous credulity of those times by the following 'droll and easy miracle.' Bishop Recho had a fox presented to him one day by an often rejected suitor, who on being asked how he could bring it thus uninjured, replied—'When the fox was in full chase, I cried out to it, in the name of my Lord Recho, to stop and be still! So the fox stood immoveable till I seized him.' The bishop was well pleased to find that his sanctity had so plainly revealed itself in this *miracle*, and the knavish suitor won his favour for ever!

The Irish Clergy alone maintained their free spirit by holding fast to the Holy Scriptures. 'Certainly,' wrote Columbanus to Gregory, 'Error can lay claim to antiquity, but the Truth which condemns it is always of higher antiquity still.' Irish missionaries, according to the grateful record of the great German historians whom I have so often quoted, traversed all Europe, keeping alive everywhere such an interest in Scriptural study, and diffusing even in the Dark Ages such bright rays of science and of Gospel light as greatly promoted the Reformation. Their motto was that so nobly expressed by Columbanus to Boniface IV.:—'Thorough Irish-

men are we, inhabitants of the very ends of the earth, but, however, men that receive nothing beyond the teaching of Evangelists and Apostles.'

Stormy and sad were the last days of this last Roman bishop. A terrible famine desolated Rome, and the people ascribed it to his mismanagement of the revenue. His last hours were most miserable. 'My pain,' he complained, 'is at one time excessive, and less at another; but never so great as to kill me. Thus I am every day dying, and yet never die. But I am a great criminal, and as such, deservedly shut up in so painful a prison.' His death was sudden and his body was hurried without honour to the tomb. The fury of the multitude drove them to wreak their vengeance by destroying the library which he loved so well. Peter, his Archdeacon, attempted to appease them by affirming that he had often seen the HOLY SPIRIT, in the visible shape of a dove, hovering over the bishop's head, as he sat writing in that library! When he was required to confirm his assertion by an oath, he ascended the pulpit, but before he concluded his solemn adjuration, he fell down dead, and that awful catastrophe was instantly turned by the monks into a divine testimony to his truth! Hence Christian travellers are shocked by seeing every picture of Gregory I. in Rome, blasphemously surmounted with the HOLY SPIRIT as a dove, floating above his head.

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(See Gibbon, v. 353-362. Milman, *L. C.* i. 264-287, 429-476. Neander, iii. 449; iv. 110; v. 12, 150, 177-180, 193 265. Mosheim, ii. 7, 17, 31, 47, 49. Gieseler, ii. 184-168. Greg. Mag. Dial. i. 2, 10; ii. 23, 33; iv. 39, 40, 55. Magna Moral. i. 6; ii. 14. Bower's Lives of the Popes, ii. 463-543. Catholic Layman, iii. 72. Southey, B. Ch. i. 39. Fuller, Ch. Hist. i. 10. King, I. C. H. i. 293-300. Erasm., Epist. Mabillon, ann. i. 305.)

## CHAPTER XII.

'Rome fell—but falling kept the highest seat,  
 And in her lowliness, her pomp of woe,  
 Where now she dwells, withdrawn into the wild,  
 Still o'er the mind maintains from age to age,  
 Her Empire undiminished !'

—ROGERS.

## THE POPEDOM ESTABLISHED.

PHOCAS rose to the Imperial throne from the condition of a centurion. His stunted, deformed figure, shaggy overhanging eye-brows, fiery red hair, shorn chin, and the scar across his cheek which grew perfectly black in his fits of fury, gave him a horribly repulsive aspect, which but too truly indicated his mean and cruel character, for he was drunken and profligate, bloodthirsty and brutal, stern and savage in speech, a heretic and a coward. When the falling Emperor Maurice heard that the Usurper was devoid of personal courage, he despondingly exclaimed, 'If he is a coward, he will be a murderer !' Prophetic words, for the first act of Phocas was to order Maurice and his five sons to be massacred, and their gory heads to be cast before his throne, there to lie till they became too noisome to be borne. John the Patriarch of Constantinople had gratefully sheltered the helpless widow and three daughters of the murdered Emperor from the tyrant's rage, and it was as much to punish him for this act of

humanity, as to show his gratification at the adulation with which Gregory I. hailed his accession, that the blood-stained tyrant conferred upon his successor Boniface III. the title of Universal Bishop, in the memorable year 606-7.

Gregory's denunciation of it as a name of blasphemy and a mark of Antichrist were so recent and public, its giver and his motives so infamous, and the adulation of Boniface at the Imperial Court so scandalous, that the monkish annalists of those days pass over the transaction vaguely and quickly. So mystery shrouds the assumption of that ominous and awful dignity, before which a great part of Christendom has ever since bowed down, and which places the Pope of Rome, in the estimation of his votaries, in the proud but perilous pre-eminence of the Head of the Church,

‘The unapproachable,  
The foremost man in all the world.’

Hence all we know of this momentous affair is, that Boniface died immediately after his investiture ; and that his successor Boniface IV., with the sanction of Phocas, celebrated the new dignity conferred upon Roman pontiffs by converting the Pantheon, that famous pagan temple which contained all the gods of Ancient Romanism, into a Church dedicated to those tutelary deities of Modern Romanism the Virgin and Martyrs, and by garnishing it with a multitude of images raised to their honour!—‘following out,’ says Neander, ‘the pagan idea.’

If a Pagan priest had now risen from the dead, and revisited the Pantheon, he would have scarcely recognized any change in the dress and ceremonial of the priests ; the appearance of the worshippers ; and the ornaments and images which he had left in that Temple. But surely St. Paul would never

have recognized his modest and faithful Greek Church, when he was directed to the great idol temple as its place of worship; found there paganly shaven monks and paganly vested priests busily pouring clouds of incense—of that very incense in which primitive Christians, at the risk of martyrdom, refused to trade!—over images which he but too well remembered as those of Jupiter Tonans, of Cybele, and of Mars. If for three mortal hours he had heard Mass chaunted in the language and to the music of the Roman theatre; and if, at the close, he witnessed the pope coming forth arrayed in the purple of the persecuting Cæsars, and, after bowing down to the image of Jupiter, now named St. Peter's, announcing himself as, by the favour of the Emperor Phocas, Head of the Church, Vicar of CHRIST, the successor of the Prince of the Apostles, and the Pope of Rome.

He 'who giveth not His glory to another, nor His praise to graven images,' almost while the gates of the Pantheon were being first closed after such a scene as I have described, permitted Mahommed to come forth, as the scourge of idolaters. Arabia, his country, possessed in the descendants of Ishmael—that 'wild man whose hand was to be against every man, and every man's hand against him'—a warrior-race, remarkably suited to be the executioners of the Divine justice. Their spirit was free, their steps unconfined, their dwelling the desert, their pastoral and hunter's life severely exercised them in courage and patience, energy and sobriety. These roving tribes of the desert could scarcely have pursued their uniform life, dwelling under similar tents, and conducting their flocks to the same springs as in the days of Moses, but for their possession of a faithful friend in the horse, and a laborious slave in the camel. The Arabian horses are trained in the tents, among the children, with a tender familiarity which secures their gentleness

and attachment, and develops fully their instinct. They are accustomed only to walk and to gallop ; their sensations are not blunted by the incessant abuse of the spur and the whip ; but ' they have fleet steeds that follow,' for no sooner do they feel the touch of the hand or the stirrup, than they dart away with the swiftness of the wind, and if their friend be dismounted in the rapid career, they instantly stop till he has recovered his seat. The camel, or ' the ship of the desert,' as he is fondly called by the Arab, is even more serviceable to him, for that strong and patient beast of burden, with its broad and spreading feet, so suited to a sandy soil, can perform, without eating or drinking, a journey of several days ; and a reservoir of fresh water contained in the fifth stomach not only supplies the animal itself, but often preserves the master's life, in passing through dreary wastes, and boundless levels of sand, without shade or shelter, and scorched by the direct and intense rays of a tropical sun. Alive or dead, almost every part of the camel is serviceable to the Arab ; her milk is plentiful and nutritious ; the young flesh has the taste of veal, the dung supplies the deficiency of fuel in places where timber is unknown ; and the long hair, which falls every year and is renewed, is manufactured by the women into garments, furniture, and tents. Their isolation from the rest of mankind has accustomed the Arabs to nourish a spirit of self-importance which renders them intolerant of the slightest insult ; and blood alone can wash out the least stain upon their honour. It has also accustomed them to confound the ideas of stranger and enemy, so they claim everything that passes through their boundless deserts as their own lawful prey. If a Bedonin discovers from far a solitary traveller, he rides furiously against him, shouting, ' Undress thyself, thy aunt, my wife, is without a garment.' A ready submission alone secures mercy ; resistance is certain death. The



fierceness of so numerous a race, thus armed against mankind, preserved their liberty even from the invasion of the iron-clad legions of Augustus, which melted away, consumed with thirst, hunger, and fatigue, in pursuit of invisible foes, ever vanishing on their fleet steeds, and conveying their goods on their camels to far off and safe retreats in the heart of the burning solitude. But many an oasis by its shady groves, green pasture, flourishing palm-trees, and ever-springing well—fondly called by the Arab ‘the diamond of the desert’—delights the traveller. All the high lands that border the Indian Ocean enjoy a climate so temperate, fruits so delicious, and a soil so fertile, that the Romans called them ‘Arabia the Happy.’ Then the situation of the peninsula made it the ‘pathway of the nations,’ by saving merchants from long and perilous navigation, so caravans were perpetually passing through it laden with precious cargoes, including those peculiar productions of Arabia, coffee, and delicious aromatics, whose spicy odours breathe on the coast, and

‘For many a league

Pleased with the grateful scent old Ocean smiles.’

Poetry might almost claim the Arabic as its peculiar language, for its copiousness and power of various expression is almost inexhaustible. What language but that can supply with the slightest shades of meaning, fourscore names for honey, two hundred for a serpent, five hundred for a lion, and a thousand for a sword? So luxuriant was the fancy of the Arab, and so essentially poetical was the nation, that the appearance of a rising poet was hailed as a national triumph. A solemn banquet was prepared, and a chorus of women striking their timbrels, chanted the praises of the literary champion who had appeared to vindicate the renown of his race. At the great annual fair thirty days were employed in

the exchange, not only of corn and wine, but of eloquence, poetry, and story telling. The prize in each was eagerly disputed; the victorious performance was deposited in the Archives of the Emirs. Valour, love, and hospitality were the darling themes of their poets, whose patriotic lays powerfully tended to unite the tribes by indissoluble bonds. Their religion, or rather idolatry, consisted in the worship of the sun, the moon, and the fixed stars, by the guidance of which they steered their nightly marches, and whose names, order, and stations in the sky were familiar to the Arabs in their perpetual wanderings under a firmament so clear, and over plains so naked. Multitudes of Jews had found refuge in Arabia, owing to their rite of circumcision, which was common to the descendants of Ishmael. Christians, too, chiefly Nestorian and heretical, had also reared their churches in the cities and their castles in the wilderness. These strangers were known as 'the people of the Book,' and the curious Arabian poets rendered into their own language some of the most sublime and beautiful passages of 'The Book' of the Jews and Christians, together with their most popular legends. They rejoiced to discover the fathers of their own nation in the history of the Hebrew Patriarchs; and to trace their own pedigree through them to the First Man. Abraham was their favourite character, and they vehemently applauded his faith in one God; and the birth and promises of their own forefather Ishmael.

The researches of modern scholars and the recent discovery at Cawnpore of a biography of Mahommed, written by his secretary, have almost cleared away the haze of adoring and hostile tradition which had so long made his character one of the most perplexing problems in history. He was born in the year 570, became in his infancy a destitute orphan, and to his early privations and shepherd's life are ascribed his melan-

choly and poetical temperament. In his twenty-fifth year he entered the service of Cadijah, a rich widow at Mecca, who rewarded his fidelity with the gift of her hand and fortune. The more devout Arabs spent 'holy months' in hermitages; and Mahommed, in his fortieth year, retired for solitary worship to a secluded cell, scooped out of a mountain near Mecca. Here in that dreamy meditation which, to a high-wrought imagination, as we have seen in the case of monks, is so apt to kindle into visionary communion with the unearthly and invisible, Gabriel flashed upon his excited fancy, a mighty and majestic figure with his feet upon the earth and his head amongst the stars, and he fancied he heard that angel hailing him, Prophet of God. After returning home, in every slumber he saw Gabriel again, and heard him renewing his call. He suspected these sights and sounds to be the precursors of insanity; but was encouraged by his wife. One day he was alone with her when he exclaimed, 'Gabriel is come!' She was sitting, after the Arabian fashion, shrouded in her veil, and seizing him in her arms she asked, 'Dost thou now see it?' He muttered, 'I do!' She cast off her veil, and cried, 'Dost thou now see it?' 'I do not.' 'Glad tidings to thee,' she exclaimed, 'it is not a divi, but an angel; for had it been a divi it would not have disappeared and respected my unveiled face.' Still suspecting his own insanity he fled to the summit of a mountain to cast himself headlong from it; but he returned home quite tranquil, telling his wondering wife that Gabriel had caught him to his bosom, commanding him to 'Read!'—that when he sorrowfully answered, 'I cannot read,' the angel rejoined, 'Repeat then!' and inspired him with the opening 'sura,' or chapter of a new revelation! Upwards of one hundred other chapters, at long intervals, suited to the policy or passions of himself and his followers, were subsequently dictated by him

to his disciples, who wrote them down upon palm-leaves or shoulder-bones of mutton, and treasured them up in his household strong-box. Whilst composing the more poetical *suras* of his 'Book'—*Koran* in Arabic—he always heard a tinkling in his ears as if bells were ringing, or a humming as if bees were swarming round his head, his lips quivered, his hands shook, such cold convulsions came over his prostrate frame that a coverlet was cast over him, whence the epithet given to him, 'the wrapped up,' perspiration came on, the attack ceased, another sura was ready for his admiring disciples.

The Koran is only a skilful and poetical compilation from Magianism, Christianity, and above all Judaism. Its only novelty is the Mission of Mahommed as the Prophet of God, promised to Adam, and foretold by CHRIST as the Paraclete that was to come! Its highly poetical character, its permission of a plurality of wives and of indulgence in rapine and massacre, and its prohibition of wine, for which they had no relish, made the Koran congenial to the inclination of the Arabs and their kindred races; and Mahommed's poetic paroxysms and epileptic fits were astutely turned by the impostor into such a semblance of inspiration as gave a divine sanction to what was in reality the dictate of the spirit of the time and the voice of the Arabic nation. At first his progress was discouragingly slow. Adversaries, he tells us, objected. 'The Koran is a confused heap of dreams; nay, he hath forged it; nay, he is a *poet*; let him come unto us therefore with some miracles, in the like manner as the former prophets were sent.' With consummate craft he pointed to the persecution borne by miracle-working prophets, and their ill success, and declared that his mission was that not of a worker of miracles, but of a public preacher.

At first Mahommed was the gentle preacher of the One

God, and taught respectful homage to the SAVIOUR, and reverence to the Patriarchs, Prophets, and Apostles. Gibbon points out that the strange notion of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin, which has lately created such commotion in Christendom, originated with Mahommed, in his desire to conciliate her votaries ! He even admitted her to be one of the only four perfect women the world ever saw, the others being his own wives, Cadijah, Fatima, and Asia, the wife of Pharsal. But when the Jews scornfully refused to receive the ' Hope of Israel ' from the outcast race of Ishmael ; and when the Christians scoffed at his pretensions to the office of their Paraclete, the disappointment of his high-wrought hopes provoked the terrible vengeance with which he persecuted the former as ' Unbelievers ' and the latter as ' Idolaters,' as soon as he rose into power from being the prophet of his own household to the dignity of being the Prophet of his tribe and finally of his nation.

So the nature of his mission was soon changed into the fierce spirit of an avenger. The sword first unsheathed in self-defence against his persecutors of the Koreish tribe, was soon bathed in the blood of Jews and Christians, and ' Islamism,' or the homage to one God, as he called his pretended revelation, became a military mission propagated by the sword. ' For,' said he, ' the Sword is the key of Heaven and of Hell ; a drop of blood shed in the cause of Islamism, a night spent in arms, is of more avail than two months of fasting or prayer. Whosoever falls in battle, his sins are forgiven ; at the day of judgment his wounds shall be resplendent as vermilion, and odoriferous as musk ; and the loss of his limbs shall be supplied by the wings of angels and of cherubim.' His exaggeration of the doctrine common to Jews and Christians, of a special Providence over the people of God into a stern and absolute Predestinating Fate directly

raised the courage of his followers to the highest imaginable pitch of reckless daring; for they believed there could be no danger where there was no chance; they were fated to perish in their beds; or they were safe and invulnerable amongst the darts of the enemy. Medina was the first great city that submitted to Mahommed, and his white banner, surmounted with a crescent moon, was soon followed by a multitude of wild Arabs, whom his voice invited to freedom and victory, to arms and rapine, to the indulgence of their darling passions in this world and the next. The Jews there were numerous and powerful; with the might of a whirlwind he and his armed host burst upon their castles and fastnesses, massacred seven hundred and ninety of them in cold blood, and tracked their course with blood to Mecca. The Caaba opened its unresisting gates; the three hundred and sixty idols were dashed to pieces amidst shouts of 'The Truth hath come, let lies disappear!' Then for the first time the muezzin proclaimed from its roof the never since changed watchword of the Arabian avenger, 'There is one God, and Mahommed is his prophet.' Lord of Mecca, their holy city, Mahommed stood supreme and alone, sole ruler of the Arabian mind and heart; now affording to disdain the alliance of those whom before he might stoop to conciliate; prompt to express hatred and contempt for the Christian as well as the Jew, especially for the monks, whose image-worship he called 'the abomination,' and whose worship of the Virgin he branded as a 'deification.' He excluded them from the easy terms of capitulation by which weak nations were induced to submission. 'Another sort of people that belong to the synagogue of Satan are those with shaven crowns, be sure you cleave their skulls, and give them no quarter till they either turn Mahommedans or pay tribute.'

So fiery a valour did Mahommed's writings and speeches

inspire that his fierce lieutenants, and *Caliphs*, or vicars, with their hosts of Eastern horsemen, in less than a century and a half, swept over Persia, Syria, Egypt, and Africa with the devastating and terrific fury of a whirlwind. During that period, Spain had sunk under its iron yoke, Constantinople had been twice sorely besieged by their battalions, and the south of France desolated by their locust-like swarms. Some idea may be given of the vast variety and value of the plunder which suddenly enriched, beyond the measure of their hope and knowledge, these naked robbers of the desert, by the expenditure of the Caliph Mahadi of six millions of gold dinars in one pilgrimage to Mecca, and by his long train of camels laden with snow to refresh the fruits and liquors of his banquets. His grandson Alammon, on the day of his accession, bestowed amongst his courtiers the almost incredible largess of two millions four hundred thousand gold dinars, before he drew his foot from the stirrup. At his nuptials a thousand pearls of the largest size were showered on the head of the bride, and thus originated the Oriental custom alluded to by Milton—

‘ — Or where the gorgeous East, with richest hand,  
Showers on her kings barbaric pearls and gold.’

But it was their fiery zeal to vindicate the unity of God, and purify His worship from idols and images, rather than their thirst for spoil, that spurred on the Eastern horsemen, and made them irresistible in their career of conquest. ‘Scourge of idolaters’ was the title on which every Arab plumed himself; and he vehemently vowed to exalt the true religion in spite of those who *join partners* with God. Gibbon gives melancholy evidence of the justice of this judgment. ‘The Christians of the seventh century had insensibly relapsed into a semblance of paganism; their public and private vows

were addressed to the relics and images that disgraced the temples of the East; the throne of the Almighty was darkened by a cloud of martyrs, and saints, and angels, the objects of popular veneration; and the Collyridian heretics invested the Virgin Mary with the name and honour of a goddess.'

We can now understand the memorable conflict between the Emperor Leo and Pope Gregory II., which strengthened Mahomedanism, severed the Roman from the Greek Church, and Italy from the Eastern Empire, brought the French kings across the Alps, and eventually established the Western Empire under Charlemagne, and placed the popes upon the throne of the Cæsars.

Leo was of obscure birth, from the wild province of Isauria, but his military skill and valour raised him to the Imperial throne amidst enthusiastic acclamations. After having beaten off the Mahomedans, who beleaguered Constantinople on every side, by his indomitable energy and ability, aided by the new invention of the Greek fire, he resolved to cut off the main cause of their repeated invasions by the suppression of image-worship. His first edict merely prohibited the worship of images of the SAVIOUR, the Virgin, and the saints, and commanded pictures hung on Church walls to be raised to greater height, so as to be removed beyond the reach of kisses or other marks of worship. But the monks felt that the edict struck at once at their influence, their fanaticism, and their interest, for few monasteries were without their wonder-working image. An awful volcanic eruption just then took place in the Ægean; the sky became as black as midnight; the sea, the islands, the coasts were strewn with showers of ashes and stones, and a new island arose amidst this tremendous convulsion. They boldly proclaimed these awful events as judgments upon the sacrilegious



by bishops to Councils. No religious man goes on a pilgrimage without an image. . . . You persecute us and afflict us with a worldly and carnal arm. We unarmed and defenceless, can but send a *devil* to humble and to deliver you to Satan for the destruction of the flesh.'

Without depending on the miracles or intercession of his images, Gregory then boldly summoned their votaries to take arms against the Emperor; and Liutprand the King of the Lombards, desirous of adding the Exarchate, or Viceroyalty, of Ravenna to his territories, came forth as the papal champion; Ravenna rose in insurrection, and the Viceroy was assassinated. Leo sent an army and fleet into the Adriatic, commissioned to seize the pope, and reconquer Ravenna and Italy. In a hard-fought day the two armies alternately yielded and advanced; at length the Emperor's troops retreated to their ships, but the populous sea-coast poured forth a multitude of boats in pursuit; and the waters of the Po were so deeply infected with blood, that during six years the people of its banks abstained from the fish of the river. Liutprand was received with great pomp at Rome. On entering St. Peter's Church, he cast himself at the pope's feet, put off his armour and royal attire, his girdle, his sword, his gauntlets, his royal mantle, his crown of gold, and offered them all, with a cross of massive silver, to the image of the Apostle. Gregory confirmed this act of overt rebellion against the Emperor, by convoking a great Council of bishops, at which, almost with his dying breath, he fulminated horrible curses against Leo, and all other destroyers of images.

Gregory III., his successor, lavished all the papal treasure upon images. He caused twelve pillars of precious marble to be over-laid with silver, and embossed on one side with the image of the SAVIOUR and His Apostles, on the other

with the Virgin and her train of nuns. To one church he presented an image of the Virgin, bearing the Holy Child in her arms, which actually dazzled the sight with sparkling jewels. To another he gave an image of the Virgin, wearing a crown and collar of gold, all glittering with gems, and ear-rings enriched with six jacinths. The ecstasy with which these images were received by the monks and the idol-loving Romans is indescribable. Gregory maintained a close alliance with the King of Lombardy against the Emperor, whose power in Italy was now merely nominal. But, true to the traditional policy of the papacy, he dreaded lest Italy should become an united kingdom, and himself the subject of a powerful native sovereign at his gates, or within his city. Hence after his intrigues with the Dukes of Spoleto and Benevento had failed to humble Liutprand, he, though still apparently in intimate friendship with the Lombard Sovereign, sent to the famous French champion Charles Martel the gift of those relics then supposed priceless, the keys of St. Peter's sepulchre, the filing of his chains, with the significant title of Roman Consul, and an appeal for aid which has perhaps served as a model to Pius IX.

'My tears are falling day and night for the desolate state of the Church. The Lombard king and his son are ravaging by fire and sword the last remains of the property of the Church, which no longer suffices for the sustenance of the poor or to provide lights for the daily service. They have invaded the territory of Rome and seized all my farms. My only hope is in thy timely succour. . . . The Lombards are continually speaking of thee with contempt. "Let him come, this Charles, with his army of Franks; if he can, let him rescue you out of our hands." O unspeakable grief, that such sons, so insulted, should make no effort to defend their holy mother the Church. Send, O my most Christian

son ! some faithful officer, who may report to you truly the condition of affairs here ; who may behold with his own eyes the persecutions we are enduring, the humiliation of the Church, the desolation of our property, the sorrow of the pilgrims who frequent our shrines. Close not your ears against our supplications, lest St. Peter close against you the gates of heaven. I conjure you by the living and true God, and by the keys of St. Peter, not to prefer the alliance of the Lombards to the love of the great Apostle, but hasten, hasten to our succour.'

The worldly wisdom of the pope in thus courting the favour of the conquering champion of France, will appear when we consider the extraordinary degeneracy of its Merovingian Sovereigns, who, from being the most valiant warriors of their times, had earned for themselves the title of the Sluggard Kings. After the third generation, every one of them was a father at fifteen and an old man at thirty ; nearly all died in their youth, of mere decay and debility. There was some strange pagan superstition attached to their hair, perhaps a tradition borrowed from Samson's locks, in which dwelt his strength. Every Merovingian preserved his hair untouched from his cradle to his grave. To retrench the least part of their hair was to profane their persons, to cut it off was to deprive them of all title to the throne, but if their hair was allowed to grow again their title to royalty revived. What length of hair was sufficient to qualify them for sitting on the throne was a nice point, which required much special pleading and logical subtlety to decide. On certain festive occasions the Sluggard King was brought out from the palace in which he was immured, elevated, like an idol, on a triumphal car, and paraded before the people for their worship, just as the goddess Herthar was carried about for adoration in the wilds of Germany. In such a Court the Mayor of the

palace really ruled the kingdom ; and Charles added to that hereditary rank consummate ability in the art of government, with such a stout heart and iron hand as gained him the title of Martel the Hammer, as expressive of his weighty and irresistible strokes in battle. In his laborious administration of twenty-four years, Charles restored and supported the dignity of the French throne ; crushed the rebels of Germany and France with such energy, that in the same campaign he once displayed his banner on the Elbe, the Rhone, and the shores of the Ocean. His crowning victory over the Arabs, on the seventh successive day of the memorable battle of Poitiers, rescued France from their grasp and filled Christendom with his fame. Gregory died during this negotiation, and Charles Martel survived him but one month, leaving his son Pepin in close alliance with the Roman See, and eager to obtain the title, as well as the power, of Sovereign of France. Zacharias, the new Pope, enjoyed his dignity only a few months, and by his sanction Pepin took the bold step of deposing King Childeric, who was shorn of his locks and dismissed into a monastery—the retreat or the prison of all weary or troublesome princes—happy in that no more dangerous weapon than a pair of scissors, ended his career, and Pepin ascended the throne.

Stephen II., one of the most able and ambitious pontiffs that ever grasped the crosier, took the bold step of claiming in person the protection of Pepin against the aggressions of Astolph, the new Lombard king, who openly expressed his determination to make Italy an united kingdom, having Rome as its capital. Stephen, after a forced march across the Alps, reached Pontyon, where Pepin and his family came forth to meet him. A most affecting scene took place ; the pope and his clergy, with ashes on their heads, and sackcloth upon their bodies, prostrated themselves, with a wild heart-rending

howl of agony, as suppliants at his feet, and would not rise till he had promised and sworn to succour them against the Lombards. As the winter rendered military operations impracticable, Pepin invited the pope to Paris, and there, with his two sons, was crowned by Stephen with extraordinary pomp. Pepin and Stephen routed Astolph, in one of the passes of the Alps, and pursued him to Pavia, where he was forced to purchase an ignominious peace by the surrender of the territory of Rome. But no sooner had Pepin retired beyond the Alps than Astolph marched against Rome, encamped before the Salarian gate, and demanded the surrender of the pope, declaring that he would not leave him a foot of land.

Stephen sent messengers in all haste to Pepin, pathetically describing the horrors of the siege, imploring succour, and boldly plighting his word that Pepin might expect, as his sure reward if he hastened to the rescue, 'Victory over all the barbarian nations, and eternal life.' Danger grew more imminent; and Stephen, in his agony of terror, audaciously despatched the following letter, recovered by Dean Milman, *as from St. Peter himself*, to hasten his lingering ally:—

'I, Peter the Apostle, protest, admonish, and conjure you the most Christian kings, Pepin, Carloman, and Charles, with all bishops, abbots, priests, and all monks; all judges, dukes, counts, and the whole people of the Franks. The Mother of God likewise adjures you, and admonishes, and commands you, she as well as the thrones and dominions, and all the host of heaven, to save the beloved city of Rome from the detested Lombards. If ye hasten, I, Peter the Apostle, promise you my protection in this life, and in the next I will prepare for you the most glorious mansions in heaven, and will bestow on you the everlasting joys of paradise. Make common cause with my people of Rome, and I will grant

whatever ye may pray for. I conjure you not to yield up this city to be lacerated and tormented by the Lombards, lest your own souls be lacerated and tormented in hell, with the devil and his pestilential angels. Of all nations under heaven, the Franks are the highest in my esteem; to me you all owe victories. Obey, and obey speedily, and by my suffrage (intercession) our Lord JESUS CHRIST will give you in this life length of days, security, victory; in the life to come, will multiply His blessings upon you, among His saints and angels.'

Did any peer or prelate at Pepin's court detect the imposture, and exclaim with the indignant Douglas,

'A letter forged! St. Jude to speed!  
Did ever knight so foul a deed?'

No! the king and his warrior nobles seem to have really thought they heard the voice of the Apostle, and felt that their eternal doom depended upon their instant obedience to his command. The pope, during his visit at the French Court, must have discovered their profound ignorance of Holy Writ, or he would never have hazarded such an Antichristian investiture of St. Peter with the SAVIOUR's office, as giver of victory and of eternal life. Henceforth we behold the papacy in a new phase, the time is come when war against the enemies of the pope is reckoned a meritorious act, which will qualify the most brutal and bloody soldier to become a saint in heaven, and the enlistment in a war of extermination for the extension of the pope's domains is now a sure passport to glory.

Such a trumpet-call, as a direct summons from St. Peter himself, rapidly brought the French host again across the Alps. Astolph, routed in the first battle, and hotly besieged

at Pavia by the King and the Pope, with a sigh relinquished the keys and hostages of the cities of the contested territory to Pepin, whose ambassador solemnly presented them to the pope before the pretended tomb of St. Peter. This splendid donation of Pepin bears the memorable date 755, and granted in absolute dominion the cities and territories of Rome, Ravenna, Rimini, Pesaro, Fano, Cesana, Sinigaglia, Jesi, Forlimpopoli, Forli, with the castle Sussibio, Montefeltro, Acerra, Monte di Lucano, Serra, San Marino, Bobbio, Urbino, Cagli, Luciola, Gubbio, Commachio, and Narni, which was severed from the dukedom of Spoleto. The mysterious circle was further enlarged when Stephen, after the death of Astolph, extorted from his successor Desiderius, as the price of keeping the rightful heir of the throne in a monastery, Faenza, Imola, with some other castles, and the whole duchy of Ferrara.

The new kingdom bore the singular name of 'Peter's Patrimony,' because Pepin refused to surrender it to its rightful lord the Emperor Constantine Copronymus, declaring that his sole object in the war was to show his veneration for St. Peter, and that he had bestowed it on the Pope, by right of conquest, for St. Peter. The pope eluded the Emperor's claim by declining communion with a monarch whose antagonism to image-worship had tainted him with heresy, and by sheltering himself under the protection of the orthodox Pepin, whom he created Patrician of Rome, a convenient title which might mean anything of sovereignty, or nothing more than a mere armed ally. But 'the pope's men,' who passed through the new realm, demanded the homage of the authorities and people in behalf of the Republic of Rome, to whose venerable sway they joyfully bowed.

Fraud is unmistakably stamped upon every act of this nefarious transaction. The new kingdom is solicited for a dead

person, from whom a forged letter is presented ; the Emperor's claim is eluded by a false accusation of heresy, his reformation being thoroughly Christian ; the king's alliance is secured by a visionary office ; the people are ensnared by the delusive hope that thus the old Republic was to rise again, like the Phœnix from her ashes ; and the sole gainer is the pretended successor of the pretended bishop of Rome, who claims an earthly sovereignty as the representative of HIM whose ' kingdom is not of this world ! ' What gives a still deeper shade of guilt to pope Stephen's fraudulent acquisition of temporal dominion, is his taking it as a gift from a foreign prince, whose favour he had purchased by absolving him of the crime of treason against his own Sovereign, and by establishing him upon an usurped throne.

Pepin's death was a blow which almost overthrew the new papal throne, for the first act of the widowed Queen Bertha was to betroth her son Charles to the Princess Hermingard, daughter to Desiderius the Lombard king, and her daughter Gisela to his son Adelchis. Stephen III. was then pope, and he sagaciously saw such danger to his sway in this double connexion between his Italian enemy and the children of his French protector, that he exhausted the whole papal arsenal of maledictions upon this union ' between the noble and generous race of the Franks, the most ancient in the world, and the fetid brood of the Lombards, a brood hardly reckoned human.' Charles married Hermingard, but the pope's curses were thorns in his pillow. Superstition conquered love, he threw back his mourning bride upon her father, and added insult to injury by his immediate marriage with a German lady named Hildegard, to prove to the pope the sincerity of his repudiation of his first wife. Stephen did not long enjoy his cruel triumph, and was succeeded by Hadrian I., a skilful statesman, whose ability, vigour, and courage sustained the



tottering papal throne. He personally, a new office for the pope, superintended the military preparations for the defence of Rome, gathered troops from every district in his power, strengthened the fortifications of the city, barricaded the gates, and removed the treasures of the suburban churches into the heart of the Capitol.

Desiderius, at the head of his army and accompanied by all his family, advanced towards Rome, and offered his alliance to Hadrian, if he would espouse his side in the quarrel with Charles, and anoint the orphan children of his late deceased brother Carloman, as heirs of King Pepin's throne. But Hadrian had too much sagacity not to discern the rising power of Charlemagne, whose genius as a statesman, and military renown as a warrior, had already blended the title Great with his name. So whilst he sent bishops to awe Desiderius and to warn him off from 'Peter's patrimony,' he secretly sent ambassadors to the French King, offering him the papal sanction to his usurpation of the dominions of the orphan princes, and entreating immediate succour.

Charlemagne, with his usual rapidity, assembled his forces, crossed the Alps by forced marches, and, though one of the divisions of his army was routed by Adelchis, in the descent from Mont Cenis, he outstripped the Lombard troops sent in pursuit of him, and laid siege to Pavia, which, being strongly fortified, resisted for many months. During the siege, Charlemagne, at the following Easter, proceeded to Rome to perform his devotions at the shrine of St. Peter, and to knit more closely his league with the Pope. He had been already honoured with the title of Patrician, so all the honours paid to the head of the Roman Republic were lavished upon him, for in Hadrian's hopes, he might become the guardian, the champion of the papal throne, whilst his remote residence beyond the Alps diminished the danger which might be

apprehended from a neighbouring potentate. At Novi, thirty miles distance, he was met by the Senate and nobles of the city, with their banners displayed. For a mile beyond the gates the Flaminian Way was lined by the military, the *Schools*—or national communities—of Greeks, Lombards, Saxons, &c., and troops of children, with palms and olive branches in their hands, chaunting the praises of their great deliverer. At the gate he was met by a procession bearing all the crosses and standards of the city. Immediately he dismounted from his horse, proceeded on foot with all his officers and nobles to the Vatican, where the pope and clergy, on the steps of St. Peter's, stood ready to receive him. As he slowly ascended he bowed down and kissed the steps; at the top he was embraced by the pope, and they marched together to the altar as equals and brothers; but it was remarked by the quick-witted Romans, that their Patrician assumed the post of honour, the right hand of the pope. At the close of his visit it is said that Charlemagne placed upon the altar of St. Peter a deed ratifying the donation of his father Pepin, having been induced to do so, as Mosheim proves from an Epistle of Hadrian, by the exhibition of the famous forged Donation of Constantine the Great—forgery upon forgery!

The support of such a champion as Charlemagne completed the supremacy of the Pope over Western Christendom. His fifty-three brilliant campaigns amaze the sedentary reader by their display of his incessant activity of mind and body. His subjects and enemies were not less astonished at his sudden presence at the moment when they believed him at the most distant extremity of the Empire; neither peace nor war, nor summer nor winter, were a season of repose to Charlemagne. His conquests sent his renown so widely through the world that fancy itself could not paint his portrait with natural colours. Centuries after he was consigned to the tomb, romance-writers

loved to exaggerate the height of his majestic figure till it towered to eight feet, and to describe even his strength and appetite as so matchless amongst men, that at a single stroke of his good sword *Joyeuse*, he cut asunder a horseman and his horse, and at a single repast he devoured a goose, two fowls and a quarter of mutton ! So great was the fame of his exploits that the Caliph Harun Al Rashid, whose dominion stretched from Africa to India, sent ambassadors to him bearing as gifts, an Arab tent, a water-clock, and the keys of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem. The Empress Irene opened an alliance with him which was supposed to conceal a treaty of marriage ; and the ambassadors of the Emperor Nicephorus having followed him in one of his wonderful marches to the banks of the river Sala, were absolutely confounded by witnessing in a Franconian village greater pomp and pride than the Byzantine palace could display. The Greeks were successively led through four halls of audience ; in the first they were ready to fall prostrate before a splendid personage in a chair of state, till he informed them that he was only a servant, the master of the horse. The same mistake and the same answer were repeated in the apartments of the Count palatine, the Steward and the Chamberlain ; and their impatience was gradually heightened, till the doors of the presence-chamber were thrown open and they beheld the genuine monarch on his throne, enriched with the foreign luxury which his high genius knew how to disdain, in comparison with the love and reverence of the victorious chiefs who encircled him.

But what chiefly casts lustre over Charlemagne's character is his literary genius. In a life spent in perpetual action he could only derive knowledge from men not books ; and it was in his mature age that he strove hard to acquire the art of writing, which every peasant now learns in his infancy,

having previously had, says Mabillon, 'a mark to himself, like an honest plain-dealing man.' Still the publication of books in his name as their author; the foundation of cathedral and palatine schools, some say of the University of Paris; the introduction of arts and sciences, and the bright array of foreign scholars which illuminated his court and camp wherever he pitched them, displayed such intellectual powers, as made him the marvel of his times, and nobly distinguish him above the crowd of kings.

Hallam remarks, that this strong sympathy for intellectual excellence biassed Charlemagne in his chief political error—that of encouraging the power and pretensions of the Church, in addition to the equitable provision of Tithes which he settled upon its clergy; but his superiority to the gross superstitions of his age is evident in the memorable Council which he held at Frankfort, when, in the midst of the vast assembly of bishops from Italy and Germany, France and Britain, he boldly descended into the arena of controversy, and trod his safe middle path of moderation with admirable firmness and dignity, rejecting with uncompromising disdain alike those subtle distinctions of shades of worship, *latria*, *hyperdoulia*, and *doulia*, by which image-worship was attempted to be cleared from the charge of idolatry; and prohibiting adoration, worship, reverence, kneeling, kissing, burning lights, or offering incense to images, under any pretext or in any form. He sent his 'Carolinian Books' (which are said to have owed much to the great British divine Alcuin, who was called 'the Emperor's delight,' from the favour he enjoyed at Court) to Pope Hadrian, whose reverential and feeble answer proves his inability to encounter a more powerful theologian, as well as his awe of Charlemagne's towering greatness.

Leo III. ascended the papal throne after Hadrian; and so harassed was he by the secret intrigues and open violence

of the vicious nephews of his predecessor—whose lavish bestowal of Church dignities upon them gave rise to the hitherto unknown sin called *nepotism*—that he fled for refuge to Charlemagne, who decided on holding a Synod at Rome for hearing the case. After a tedious investigation, and a solemn declaration of his innocence before God and the people, the pope was acquitted of all the scandalous charges against him. Christmas Day arrived—the Christmas of the last year of the Eighth Century. Charlemagne and all his sumptuous Court, the nobles and people and whole clergy of Rome, were present at the high services of the Nativity, celebrated at St. Peter's. The pope himself intoned the Mass; the choir swelled aloft the thrilling melody of the Gregorian Chant; clouds of intoxicating incense rose from a thousand golden censers. There was a solemn pause—the pope arose, advanced towards Charles, with a gorgeous crown in his hands, placed it upon his lofty brow, and proclaimed him 'Cæsar Augustus; God grant life and victory to the great and pacific Emperor of the Romans!' The Senate and people joined in the enthusiastic acclamations, thus ratifying the magnificent title, which would not have been valid without their assent; and Charlemagne submitted to be successor to the Cæsars, as ruler over all Western Christendom. The Romans were flattered by exercising their old grand prerogative of nominating the Master of the World; the Franks felt themselves honoured by this adoption into the old disdainful Roman Society. Charlemagne felt himself secured in his conquests by the sanction of the Head of the Church, whose decree was now received with trembling deference by all Western Christendom, which beheld in him another St. Peter; but the pope obtained the solid profit of the act, for the new Emperor then swore to maintain the spiritual privileges and powers of the Roman pontiff, and left to his successors an awful sense

of subjugation to the pope, who might grant or withhold the Imperial coronal at his pleasure.

Just before the fatal expedition to Spain, in the year 813, 'when Charlemagne with all his peerage fell, by Fontarabia,' he associated his son Louis with himself in the Imperial power, and, as if foreseeing and preventing the latent claims of the pope, he caused the royal youth to take the crown from the altar, and with his own hands to place it on his head, as a gift which he held from God, his father and the nation. But he forgot that by establishing in royal powers the popes of Rome, he had introduced a totally new class of princes into the field of European diplomacy, men of mature age, the sole repositories of the scanty learning of the Dark Ages, and of such vast spiritual sway as to make grasping secular ambition a second nature, if not an imperative duty, supported too by innumerable legions of fanatic monks, ready to peril life and limb and salvation in their service. Could the youthful, indolent, and illiterate princes, so often suddenly raised to their fathers' thrones by the disastrous wars of those times, venture to confront, much less to control, these new Roman potentates? Charlemagne, in his partial affection, judged of his successors by himself, and his sceptre was the bow of Ulysses, which could not be drawn by any weaker hand. He stands alone in the troublous history of succeeding times, like a beacon upon a waste, or a rock in the broad ocean. Then what council-chamber could display such sagacious councillors as the College of Cardinals? Here was a body of priests, whose title, however modest in its origin, was soon to emulate the purple of kings. From these 'princes of the Church,' as they had now become, nearly every Court of Europe was henceforth supplied with some astute diplomatist, who, under the mask of superior sanctity, skilfully exacted state-secrets and managed intrigues—with one sole

aim, the extension and maintenance of the Royalties of St. Peter. The rest formed an Ecclesiastical Senate at Rome, whose fidelity was secured by their ample share in the honour and authority of the pope, and whose astuteness was intensified by daily attendance upon his presence, as his assistants in the management of home and foreign affairs. And the money-power of the popes was also vastly greater than that of all other Sovereigns. Neander points out a new and lucrative source of revenue opened at this time, by their adoption of the pagan custom of *pecuniary* fines or compensation for crime. Hence the origin of indulgences, by which the wealthy could easily purchase exemption from the punishment of sin, and obtain its forgiveness. Some few protested, 'If so, CHRIST would not have said, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God."' But their voices were only faintly heard amidst the loud chink of the golden showers that fell into the papal treasury.

But the lamented Archbishop Whately clearly shows that the secret of Rome's spiritual strength is mainly to be found in the fact, that all its errors have originated deep in the corruptions of our nature, and are rooted in fallen man's heart of hearts. Hence the Samson-strength by which it subdued and ruled the kings of the earth during the Dark Ages. Hence its still prouder triumph in keeping the greater part of Christendom in spiritual darkness and slavery, amidst the boasted liberty and light of our own times, the spirit of Popery being *unchanged* and *unchangeable*. He observes that the great contrast between the law of optics and of morals, sufficiently accounts for the difficulty of detecting errors in religion. In contemplating human transactions, the law of optics is reversed; we see the most indistinctly the objects which are close around us; we view them through the discoloured medium of our own prejudices and passions; the more fami-

liar we are with them, the less truly do we estimate their real colours and dimensions. Thus the Romish system rose insensibly like a young plant from the seed, making a progress scarcely perceptible from year to year, till at length it fixed its roots deeply in the soul, and spread its baneful shade far around, for it was the natural offspring of man's corrupt character, and it needed no sedulous culture. The corruptions crept in one by one, originating with a depraved and ignorant people, but connived at, cherished, consecrated, and successively established by a debased and worldly-minded ministry, and modified by them just so far as might best favour the views of their profligate ambition. The good seed 'fell among thorns,' which being fostered by those who should have been occupied with rooting them out, not only 'sprang up with it,' but finally 'choked' and overpowered it. He sagaciously traces the chief errors of modern Romanism to such perennial sources of corruption as Superstition, Fondness for Speculative Mysteries, Vicarious Religion, Pious Frauds, Undue Reliance on Human Authority, Intolerance, and Trust in Names and Privileges—all equally characteristic of the unenlightened Jew and Protestant, Pagan and Romanist. Here are some of his luminous thoughts on this curious and important subject, as much as possible conveyed in his own simple but forcible words.

Superstition is the most prevalent of all errors in religion. In no point is our spiritual Enemy more vigilant, he is ever ready not merely to tempt us with the unmixed poison of known sin, but to corrupt even our food, and taint even that medicine of the soul, religion, with the venom of his falsehood. Superstition is his chief means of corrupting religion, as it consists in any *misdirection of religious feeling*, which may be done either by the worship of objects which deserve no adoration, such as false gods; or in the worship of the



# THE HISTORY OF THE ROMANS.

The history of the Romans and symbolists: and the lan-  
 guage of superstition is extremely apt to regenerate into  
 the same. The Romans worship, for instance, of the wood of  
 the olive tree as a correspondence approaching to  
 the olive tree which was the Brazen Serpent  
 of the Jews. But the more ancient superstition  
 of the Romans was that the image was that which  
 was the immediate instrument of a miraculous  
 power, which was naturally corresponds to it in the  
 history of the Jews. (Himself points out) not  
 only the Jews, but the very person of the  
 God, by the destruction of the  
 Brazen Serpent, the second commandment, which  
 forbade the making of any graven image, by forbidden cere-  
 monies, and by the direct idol-  
 worship, which was the breach of the  
 first commandment, and that of the first begins.  
 The breach of the second was a breach of the second  
 commandment, and that of the first. Superstition is com-  
 mon to all nations, a harmless folly,  
 a weakness, a delusion, and it is said that the  
 Romans were not idolaters. But suppose the parallel case of  
 the Jews, which is quick nostrums to the good  
 of the Jews, he thinks it too simple. Is he  
 who attributes sacred efficacy to some  
 material object, with-  
 out the heart being required to ac-  
 cept of the natural food of religion is often con-  
 sidered as superstitious. Romanists resort to pil-  
 grimages, to holy water, relic-worship, crossings,  
 the most startling result of ignorant  
 superstition. In the case of Hindoos cursing  
 and giving them aid, and of the blas-

phemous jests of the ignorant vulgar, of all ranks and creeds, upon religion; although there is no real wit in profanity, for nothing can be easier, as there is but one step from the sublime to the ridiculous, and the pleasure afforded by wit chiefly arises from a perception of skill displayed, and of difficulty overcome. Every system of superstition should be read *backwards*, for 'the wish is father to the thought.' As the Roman pagan belief of the souls of unburied bodies wandering disconsolately on the banks of the Styx, arose from natural anxiety about their mortal remains; so Purgatory arose from prayers for the dead, and not the reverse. Transubstantiation did not spring from misinterpreting the text 'This is my body,' but the misinterpretation from the doctrine, and so of all Romish errors which have perverted texts alleged for their support.

Vicarious Religion and Fondness for Speculative Mysteries were remarkably characteristic of paganism. Indeed it is our natural propensity to trust our legal affairs to our lawyer, and medical to our physician, with a vague notion of some mystery in them that we cannot fathom. This is the origin of priest-craft. The Romish priesthood did but take advantage from time to time of this natural propensity, by engrafting successively on its system such practices and points of doctrine as favoured it, and which were naturally converted into a source of profit and influence to themselves. Hence the gradual transformation of the Christian minister—the presbyter—into the sacrificing priest, the *Hiereus*—in the Latin *Sacerdos*, as the Romanists call theirs—a name given by the Holy Scripture to the priests of the Jewish and Pagan religions, but which they never apply to any of the Christian ministers ordained by the Apostles. The priest in our own Church is only 'presbyter writ small,' being the contraction from the old word prester. Now St. Paul, in 'pro-

claiming the good tidings' (preaching the Gospel is a phrase so familiar as almost to lose its original force) often applies the word *mystery* to truths not discoverable by human reason, but made known by Divine Revelation, always, however, directing attention not to the concealment but the *disclosure*. (Eph. vi. 19; Ro. xvi. 25, 26.) This he does in manifest allusion to the mysteries of paganism which invested its priests with supernatural awe as concealers, not explainers, of the secrets of their religion, making it their business rather to keep the people in darkness than to enlighten them. Now TEACHING is the main duty of Christian ministers, and it is a distinguishing excellence and striking peculiarity of Christianity alone of all religions, that, as found in the Holy Scriptures, it has no priestcraft, for this simple reason, that it has (in the Romish sense) *no priest on earth*, and no priest at all except the SAVIOUR, of whom indeed all the Levitical priests were but types. It is also most important to observe, that John and Peter, in applying the title of priest to Christians, applies it to *all* of them, as 'a royal priesthood,' to prohibit this pagan vicarious notion, that religion was exclusively the concern of priests.

The Romish priest derogates from the honour of the one HIGH PRIEST, by undertaking to reconcile sinners to God through penances to be performed by them to obtain his absolution, and by profanely copying our only High Priest, in pretending to transfer to them his own merits or those of the saints. He, like a pagan rather than a Jewish priest, keeps *hidden* from the people the Book which guides their faith, that they may with ignorant reverence submit to the dominion of error, instead of being 'made free by the truth,' which he was expressly commissioned to make known to them. He also pretends to offer the Sacrifice of the Mass, to propitiate God towards himself and his congregation, and, by making its effi-

cacy depend not on the sincerity and rectitude of intention of the *communicants* themselves but in those of the priest, he profanely usurps the office of the 'One Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus' (1 Tim. ii. 5). The very terms of pastor and flock expressing the relation between minister and people are corrupted by the Romish system, which makes the people the priest's flock, and he the mediator between them and God. Hence confession to a priest, the efficacy of the penance which he enjoins, the absolution which he bestows, the celibacy which he follows as a badge of peculiar sanctity, and the doctrine of the transferableness from him to others of merits of such peculiar sanctity, as are not required of Christians generally, and which is virtually 'going to heaven by proxy.' But the language of Holy Scripture is 'feed the flock of CHRIST,' so the faithful Christian minister, like Paul and Peter, earnestly warns the people that they are not his flock, but CHRIST's, that he himself is only CHRIST's minister or *servant*, and at every step he warns the people not to take upon trust his interpretation, but, like the noble Bereans, to search the Scriptures daily whether these things be so which he teaches.

Pious Frauds naturally spring up when the people give themselves blindly to the guidance of the priests, for it tempts them to maintain and increase their spiritual tyranny by deceit, laying, perhaps, the flattering unction to their souls, that it is for a good end. So the pagan philosophers and statesmen deluded and over-awed the ancient Romans with prodigies and oracles not much less than the Romish priests. The path of falsehood, though in reality slippery and dangerous, will often be the most obvious and seemingly the shortest. So nothing more *common* among the indolent and thoughtless, when entrusted with the management of children, than to resort to this short way of controlling them; for the employment of deceit with those who are so easily deceived will often

serve a present turn much better than scrupulous veracity, though at the expense of tenfold ultimate inconvenience. Indeed, with persons ignorant of Holy Scripture, there is generally a craving after delusions; and there is this reply recorded of a Romish priest, when taxed with some monstrous imposture of his Church—‘The people wish to be deceived; and let them be deceived!’—Aaron’s defence when he made the Israelites an image at their desire! Indeed most monkish miracles and other pious frauds have begun with the superstitious people themselves, and were merely connived at—for a good end—by the priests, who gradually in repeating the falsehoods began to credit them. The very curse sent on those who do not love the truth, is that of ‘a strong delusion that they should believe a lie.’ So a man succeeds in persuading himself in time, first, that the object he is eagerly bent upon is a good end—then that it is justifiable to promote it by tolerating or inculcating falsehood—and lastly, that that very falsehood is truth.

Undue Reliance on Human Authority is another natural disposition of sluggish minds, which are disposed to carry almost to idolatry the veneration due to the wise, the good, and the great, and which shrink in dislike from doubt and troublesome investigation. Hence God’s wisdom, doubtless, defended us from a danger which no human wisdom would have foreseen, the danger of indolently assenting to, and committing to memory, some short inspired catechism or creed, which would speedily become no more than a form of words, received with indolent and blind obedience. On the contrary, God has appointed that laborious search of the Holy Scriptures should be the Christian’s lot, and shall bring with it amply its own reward. The care and diligence, and patient thought and watchful observation required in drawing for ourselves the Christian truths from the pure spring-head, will be repaid by our having—through Divine grace—those truths ulti-

mately fixed in the heart as well as in the understanding. We shall not only 'read,' but 'mark, learn, and inwardly digest them,' so that the heavenly nourishment shall enter into our whole frame, and make us not merely sound theologians, but, what is much more, sincere Christians, truly 'wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.' But nothing can be more natural to sluggish and ignorant minds than resting on the pretended infallibility of their chief priest. Unhappily this awful claim to exemption from human error shuts the door against *reform*. The smallest change in any article of *faith*, would break the talisman of infallibility, and the magic edifice of papal dominion would crumble into ruins. In *discipline*, indeed, there might be reform, but the regulations of the Romish Church concerning it have been so intertwined with doctrinal points, that she has always dreaded to alter anything, lest her infallibility should be called in question. The wisest popes have always dreaded to touch a single stone of their infirm fabric, lest another and another should be displaced.

Intolerance is alone to be prevented by Christian love, for otherwise the encounter with persons differing from us in religion is certain to excite a spirit of persecution in our minds. Speculative infidelity, for instance, is rare and startling, whilst we are but too much accustomed, alas! to see ungodly professors of our own creed; it also shakes the support which the indolent derive from authority; it is a personal affront to our own understanding; we suspect moral corruption biasing an infidel's judgment—'the evil heart of unbelief.' Hence even the rabble were often foremost in persecuting early Christians, whom the rulers blamed and punished for occasioning those tumults—'those that have turned the world upside down have come hither also!' Our SAVIOUR has told us that the penalty incurred by an incorrigible offender is, his

exclusion from the religious community which he has scandalized, and his consequent union to heathenism, to whose level he has reduced himself (Matt. xvii. 17). But in reply to the proposal of His disciples to call down fire from heaven upon the Samaritans that rejected Him, He showed that no *earthly* punishment should be inflicted upon His foes. But, guarding them from the opposite error of supposing that the rejecters of His Gospel should have no punishment at all, he soon afterwards tells them of the punishments to be inflicted upon them, not in this world but in the next, 'in the Judgment' (Luke, ix. 55 ; x. 14). The pretended successor of Peter does, indeed, proclaim his own degeneracy by his palpable disobedience to the command, to 'put up his sword into its sheath.' In literal and direct disobedience of our SAVIOUR'S command, the Roman See, though pretending to be *the* Church, will not regard her opposers as 'heathen, but as rebellious subjects,' whom she must subdue or destroy by fire and sword. The history of the world bears terrible testimony to the frightful massacres and martyrdoms perpetrated by the Church of Rome, for force and fraud have ever been the two great engines for the support of her spiritual dominion. Witness the Inquisition! Witness Jesuitism! We are gravely told that persecution does not exist in Romish countries. But the fetters gall only those who struggle against them. Where the Inquisition reigns triumphant there are no punishments for religious offences. Why?—Because the offenders have been long ago exterminated by it. No tree is withered by the frost of the polar regions, or by scorching winds of the Arabian deserts, because none exists in those regions. And no Protestant is now brought to the stake in Spain, because there persecution has done its work, by the murder of myriads of victims of all countries, including many Englishmen, guilty of the heresy of saying that the

pope has no authority in the kingdom of England, either in spiritual things or *temporal*.

Here I must pause to observe that, by the zeal of the Rev. Richard Gibbings, the Professor of Ecclesiastical History, T.C.D., and the munificence of its late Vice-Provost, Dr. Wall, the Dublin University Library now possesses as one of its choicest treasures, about seventy huge folio volumes of the *Records of the Roman Inquisition*, brought by the French from Rome after its capture in 1849. Months have rolled away since I completed my examination of those awful volumes, and yet the horror which froze my blood during their perusal haunts me still. I never could continue more than a few days at a time in this examination, without experiencing the intense feelings which melted even stern Wellington to tears, as he heard the muster-roll of his dead and dying companions in arms read on the night after the battle of Waterloo—the community of interest the same, the heroism of the fallen champions of the cross as signal—the havoc far greater. Those Records extend over several centuries, they bear the sign manual of most of the popes and cardinals. The handwriting in which they are kept is of itself startling. Often whole pages appear in beautiful Italian type, denoting the hand of some young and fiery official. Oftener the writing is cramp but firm, the tracing of an old and stern Inquisitor. But what chiefly strikes the reader is the legal accuracy of all these documents, showing that Roman persecution was systematized by its canon laws to a common, every day prosecution. Then it comes home to us when we find our own most cherished Christian principles and hopes professed by some of those victims, stigmatized as ‘heresy’ by the Inquisitors, and the order made for ‘gentle’ or ‘severe’ torture to discover the criminal’s ‘motive and intention.’ More terrible still is the discovery—never known



on earth perhaps by the victims, that a wife, a husband, a sister, a brother, has been the secret accuser—‘from duty to the Virgin and the Church.’ The signature of the unhappy victims to their confessions, or protests, is generally distinguished by the sign of the cross. O wofully perverted emblem! often traced in red ink with trembling hand, probably after the nerves and muscles had been strained almost to separation upon the rack. Pure fasting, deprivation of even bread and water, and perpetual imprisonment are among the severe tortures. The old Roman plan of starving criminals, leaving them forsooth to the care of the gods! The victims, whose sad story is now at last revealed, are of every land and every clime, including numbers of Englishmen.

But these revelations belong to later times, so I must refer to those Records or Mr. Gibbing’s pages for further information, and return to Archbishop Whately, with whose final remarks I bid my kind reader farewell.

‘Trust in Names and Privileges is also a natural feeling; but spiritual privileges which are real, and titles which are not misapplied, are too often subjects of presumptuous boast and lead to indolent security. This is the first error, and the second is its natural consequence, the name survives the thing signified, the advantages are lost wholly or in part through confident reliance on their intrinsic efficacy, without an effort to improve them. The land which was fertile becomes a desert, through a confident trust that it will ensure wealth to the possessor, while he neglects to till it. This trust in their titles and privileges is one of the most mischievous of the Romish errors and mainly introduced the rest. St. Paul in the spirit of prophesy, foresaw this special error of the proud Romans’ heart and forewarned their Church of their rejection equally with God’s ancient Church, when forsaking the faith of Abraham. (Rom. xi. 20–22.)

What was their original condition? They had renounced idolatry—they had worshipped the true God—they had the Sacred Scriptures in their hands for private study, and in their ears at their religious meetings—they had Christ's ordinances—they had despised and abhorred the superstitious offerings, purifications, and other ceremonies of the pagans, and had trusted to be saved by the Atonement of Christ alone, and for acceptance before God by being "led by His SPIRIT." These glorious privileges they began to neglect and their vain and natural confidence rested in the past, in what had been done for them—confidence in the titles of Christian—of Orthodox—of Catholic—of the Church of God and of His Apostles, and careless of living "as *becometh* saints." They trusted that no deadly error could creep into their holy community; they adopted one by one the very errors—under new names—of the paganism which their forefathers had renounced—"Striving unto blood:" and thanking God, like the Pharisee, that they were not as other men are, they became gradually like their pagan ancestors, with the aggravation of their having sinned against light, and their confidence all the while increasing along with their carelessness and corruption. When "their gold was become dross," they boasted more than ever of their wealth, in the midst of their grossest errors insisted on their infallibility! "*How did the faithful city become an harlot!*" Idolatry of the grossest kind was gradually restored; the worshippers of the one true God manifested in Christ Jesus paid their chief adoration to deified mortals. The Scriptures of Truth were secluded from the people under the veil of an unknown tongue (Latin becoming gradually obsolete); and their authority made of none effect by traditions; their sacraments became superstitious charms; their public service a kind of magical incantation, muttered in a dead language; Christian holiness was com-

muted for holy water, fantastic penances, pilgrimages, amulets, pecuniary donations, &c., &c., in the very worst forms. "*How is the faithful city become an harlot !*" We are taught that "Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light," but he does not use always, and everywhere, the same disguise. As soon as one is seen through, he is ready to assume another; and it is vain that we detect the artifice which has done its work on other men, unless we are on our guard against the same Tempter under some new transformation;—assuming afresh among ourselves the appearance of some angel of light. . . . Forgetful of this, the less shall we be on our guard against the *spirit* of popery in the human heart, against similar faults in some different shapes; the more shall we be apt to deem every danger of the kind effectually escaped, by keeping out of the pale of that corrupt Church.'

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(See Gibbon, v. 383-389; vi. 140-177, 195, 226-272. Milman, *L.C.* ii. 5-78, 119-170, 204-306. Neander, v. 178-182, 313. Mosheim, ii. 134. Gieseler, ii. 200-208, 230-231. Bower, ii. 545-550. Hallam, *Middle Ages*, i. 6-13. Forster, *Mahomedanism Unveiled*, i. 416; ii. 498. Whately, *Errors of Romanism*, *passim*. Gibbings, *Manfredi, Martyrdom of Carneseccchi*, *Minorite Friar sentenced to be walled up*. Cayman, vii. 6.)

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